

# **Rational Theology**

**John Milton Williams**

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# RATIONAL THEOLOGY

--OR--

## ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS

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BY

JOHN MILTON WILLIAMS. A. M.

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## INTRODUCTION

It hardly seems necessary, in justification of the title of this unpretentious volume, to say, that the author uses the word reason in accord with most metaphysical writers of the age -- as the equivalent of the intuitive faculty -- the faculty whose revelations underlie all knowledge, and constitute those logical antecedents on whose authority all other verities are conditioned. He conceives of the reason as the faculty whose intuitions, such as the existence of space, time, cause, God, obligation, the axioms of mathematics, etc., the soul must accept as absolutely true, or dismiss all idea of certainty from the empire of thought. If the reason cannot be accepted as absolutely infallible and its intuitions as unerringly true, nothing can; there are no foundations or landmarks in the moral world, -- everything is afloat; God and the universe are but an hypothesis.

Nor is it necessary to say he draws a broad line of demarcation between the reason and the understanding, or discursive faculty. The former is the unerring faculty, -- the faculty which makes its possessor an intelligent and moral being; gives him authoritative laws of thought and duty; lifts him to the awful summits of accountability, and, more than any other, constitutes his likeness to his Maker. The latter is frail and erring, to be cautiously exercised, and very limitedly relied upon.

The title of this volume -- Rational Theology -- indicates that the theology it sets forth is rational, or accords with reason as herein defined; in other words, excludes what is irrational, absurd and self-contradictory.

It will be asked: "Do you put reason above the Bible?" This question indicates some confusion of thought, -- at least, a definition of reason unlike the scientific, or, more probably, no definition at all; otherwise, the question would not be possible. He who claims to honor the Bible by putting it above reason would find his views instantly clarified by asking himself, Why do I accept the Bible as a revelation from God, and reject the Koran and the Book of Mormon? Would I accept the Bible, did it persistently represent God as unjust, untruthful, selfish, or ignorant? Why do I believe in the existence of God? Such question would soon satisfy him that there are deep underlying utterances in his soul, more authoritative than the Bible or anything else; and that it is because the

Bible, its revelations and claims accord with these mysterious voices he accepts it and for no other. He who says he would accept the Bible as a revelation from God, whether reasonable or not, pays a very doubtful compliment to neither the Bible or to himself.

But it is asked, Do you put reason above the clear declarations of God? No. (1.) There is no need of doing so. The clear declarations of God do, and must, accord with the reason. It is not possible God contradicts or denies on one page of His writing what he has deeply engraved upon another. (2.) "The clear declarations of God," unless sanctioned by the reason, are not the "clear declarations of God." They are but empty noises, which no one has a right to ascribe to his Maker. The intuitions of reason are divine voices in the soul. God respects them, and was not displeased when the old Patriarch assumed that his own idea of right was the absolute standard to which the divine conduct must conform to be just. This is precisely what every moral being assumes. Who does not know that injustice, cruelty and falsehood are wrong, whoever may be the perpetrator?

There are two possible inferences from this title against which the author desire to caution his readers.

1. That he had any sympathy with what is termed Rationalism -- a phase of thought which rules from the Bible all that is supernatural, and subjects its revelations to the arbitration of frail human judgment. So far from this the author accepts the Bible, the whole Bible, as a revelation from God. Though different parts may be differently inspired, he believes the whole was prepared under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit, and that the Old Testament, as it is, received the endorsement of the Great Teacher. He accepts it because of the myriad proofs that it is the product of Him who made the soul, and is in harmony with the great rhythm of things.

2. That he deems the theology of the great Christian world irrational, and claims to have something better. While he rejects the Calvinistic system of doctrine, and believes it is rapidly becoming a thing of the past, he flatters himself that the great mass of evangelical Christians will find in these papers, with the possible exception of the last, little to which it cannot cordially subscribe. The views contained in the concluding essay respecting the person of the Christ of Nazareth have for years been forcing themselves upon his conviction, and have gained such

ascendency, he finds it difficult to believe any thoughtful mind can reject them. He commends them to the thoughtful consideration of his readers, hoping they will obtain thereby a simpler concept of the Divine Man, and find "looking unto Jesus" an easier and sweeter privilege.

The author has made comparatively few quotations, has avoided technicalities, and anything like "a show of learning." He has endeavoured to bring his thoughts within the easy comprehension of the ordinary reader; still, he confesses he has had chiefly in mind his brethren in the "sacred calling," whose candour and judgment he profoundly respects, to whom, with a deep sense of its imperfections, he dedicates this little volume.

Of the eight essays of which it consists four have been already published -- one in the Bibliotheca Sacra, and three in the New Englander and Yale Review. The fact that they are disconnected, and were written at different periods, will account for any possible repetition of thought.

THE AUTHOR.

March 1st, 1888.

## **I. OLD AND NEW CALVINISM**

Is there any distinct line of demarcation between the two systems of theology known as New and Old Calvinism, or between what are usually termed Old and New School Theology?

If the question be, Is there any line dividing those who call themselves Calvinists into two distinct classes--the Old and the New?--I unhesitatingly answer, No;--there is no such line. There is a wide difference between the system taught at Oberlin and the one taught at Princeton; but every shade of theological thought lying between them, and far to the outside of both, has its representatives and strenuous advocates. Dr. Duryea describes Calvinism on one side and Arminianism on the other as two fences, upon either of which it is difficult to walk, but intimates that there is plenty of room between them. It is certainly not an easy matter to classify theological thinkers.

But may we not classify theological thought? Are there not logically two systems indicated by the names I have suggested? Starting from opposite sides of some central doctrine, if logically consistent, are we not compelled to take either the one or the other of two paths through the realm of metaphysical theology? So it seems to me, and the object of this paper is to indicate these two paths. It will be understood my remarks relate to systems rather than to men.

The ground I should otherwise have to traverse is immeasurably narrowed by the fact that these two systems embrace in common the great bulk of revealed truth, --nine-tenths, perhaps ninety-nine-hundredths, of the whole. The divine authority and inspiration of the Bible, the being, attributes, and tri-personality of God, the deity, incarnation, and atonement of Christ, the divinity, personality, and offices of the Holy Spirit, the lost and helpless state of man, his need of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and pardon through the shedding of blood, the obligations and sanctions of the divine law, the Sabbath and Sacraments and duty of a holy and consecrated life, and the eternal awards of the life to come, belong equally to both systems. Indeed, the doctrines in dispute cover but a small segment of the whole circle of revealed truth, and even in this narrow field the difference relates, not so much to the facts, as to their underlying philosophy and explanation. Dr. Hodge well asks: "What is Pelagianism or Arminianism, or almost any other ism, but a particular system of religious philosophy, and what are the questions which divide and alienate Christians, but questions of mental and moral science?" It's not the fact of depravity, and atonement, and regeneration, about which we differ, but the philosophy and explanation of these facts.

Still, I am compelled to admit that the explanations and underlying theories are important, and open a wide field of profitable inquiry. Every scribe well instructed in the things of the kingdom will have a philosophical theory, in which all these facts will take their place in harmony with each other, and with all known truth. I can respect as a Christian, but not as a Christian teacher, the man who has no distinct self-consistent definition of sin and holiness, of repentance, regeneration and faith, who has no idea as to how God can be just, and the justifier of believing men. Every teacher of religion, to meet the sharp questionings of his hearers and satisfy his own cravings for consistency, must have a

philosophy as well as theology.

But where shall we commence?--at what point does the divergence of these two systems take its rise? I answer without hesitation, with the doctrine of man's free agency, or of the freedom of the will. "In every system of theology," says Dr. Charles Hodge, "there must be a chapter de libero arbitrio. This is the question every theologian finds in his path, and which he must dispose of, and on the manner in which it is determined depends his theology." "These two systems [Calvinism and Arminianism]," says Dr. Strieby, "are characterized and determined by the views of the human will, upon which they are respectively founded." "Calvin," says Dr. Curry, "in whose mind the logical faculty was predominant, who never hesitated to follow out his own accepted premises to their legitimate conclusions, developed a complete system of philosophical theology, which so exalted the Divine sovereignty in grace and providence as to leave no room for the action of any creature, except as moved and actuated by the power of God. Whatever might occur must therefore be interpreted as the outcome of the will of God, whether of righteousness or of sin, eternal life or eternal death. The only possible law in the universe was the divine decrees, from which there was no departure. The actions of all creatures were subject to his hands, in both their inception and execution; and the whole universe, spiritual and physical, was subject to a complete order of predestination," making a necessitated will the basis of the Calvinistic system.

Here is the genesis of the controversy. Both schools call the will free, but they differ, *toto cælo*, as to the nature of freedom. Here is the vital pivotal point; and right here we need to do some clear thinking in order to get an adequate and comprehensive view of the two theologies.

Dr. Reid's definition of Freedom (see vol. iii., p. 326), which a writer in the Princeton Review tells us has been substantially adopted by all subsequent Pelagian and Arminian writers, is this: "By liberty of a moral agent, I understand a power over the determinations of his own will. If in any action he had power either to will or not to will, what he did, he is free. But if, in every voluntary action, the determination of his will be a necessary consequence of something involuntary in the state of his mind, or of some thing in his external circumstances, he is not free, but is the subject of necessity." New Calvinism accepts, Old Calvinism rejects, this definition; and just here theology divides into two schools.

There is something in the mind antecedent to choice, from which choices proceed; call it nature, disposition, motive, inclination, heart, taste, relish, propensity, what we will; the decisive question is what is the relation between this antecedent something and the resultant choice. Is it that of cause and effect? Do inclinations and motives coerce or merely solicit? Must the choice correspond, without the possibility of an alternative, with this preceding state, or, in given conditions, are either of opposite choices possible? In other words, does the will determine its own choices, or something behind the will? Something, answers the Old Calvinist, behind the will--the strongest motive, the most agreeable, the greatest apparent good--in every case.

The gist of the argument of Edwards--the most able exponent of the Calvinistic theory of the will,--is this: If motive is not the producing cause of choice, then choice has no cause, and we have the anomaly of an event without a cause. Dr. Hodge holds that choices are always dominated by the previous state of mind, and characterizes the opposite view as "Pelagianism," "the doctrine of contingency," "the liberty of indifference," etc. His definition of freedom is this: "Man is free when his volitions are truly and properly his own, determined by nothing out of himself, but proceeding from his own views and feelings and imminent states of mind, so that they are real conscious expressions of his own character, or what is in his mind." (See *Theology*, vol. ii., p. 285.) This is substantially Dr. Reid's definition of necessity.

Again, vol. ii., p. 289, he says: "The will is not independent, indifferent, or self-determined, but is always determined by the preceding state of mind, so that a man is free so long as his volitions are the conscious expressions of his own mind, so long as his activity is determined by his own reason and feelings"--a definition which would make water free, so long as its activity is determined by its own nature and laws.

Page 279 he is still more explicit: --"The whole question, therefore, is whether when a man decides to do a certain thing, his will is decided by his previous state of mind, or whether, with precisely the same views and feelings, his decisions may be one way at one time, and another at another; that is, whether the will to be free must be undetermined," and he clearly takes the ground that choices are decided by the previous state of mind, and can not but accord with it.

Professor Atwater, in his celebrated article (see Princeton Review, 1840), on "The Power of Contrary Choice," sums up the whole matter thus: "The question is whether the will is so constituted that at the moment of any given choice, under precisely the same motives and inward inclinations and external inducement, it may turn itself either way--either in the way it actually does choose, or in the opposite, either in accordance with its highest pleasure or inclination, or in direct and utter hostility to them; and whether such a property in the human will be essential to liberty, moral agency, praise and blame, reward and punishment--a question which lies at the very root, as will be perceived, of some of the chief questions in divinity and ethics." The Professor, lest he should be charged with "fighting a fiction of his own fancy," quotes to some extent from contemporary writers, to prove there are men who hold and teach the doctrine of the power of contrary choice, and then devotes the remainder of his lengthy article to an exposure of the folly and absurdity of such a theory, and earnestly contends that, in a given state of mind, the power of making either one of the two opposite choices is not possible to any human being.

Now a man, when he acts, is always in a given state of mind, and if he can not turn in either of two ways, he can, of course, turn in but one way--the way he does turn, and can do only as he does. He has no freedom, no choice, no alternative. This is the Old Calvinistic doctrine of the will, to wit: choices necessarily accord with their antecedent motive or states of mind.

But says the old Calvinist, after all, a man has ability to do as he pleases, and this is all the liberty he can ask. But if he can not do otherwise, if he can act in but one way--the way he pleases--is he in any proper sense free? The will can yield to the most pleasing, the most agreeable, to the strongest motive undoubtedly; so can the scales to the greatest weight, and there is just as much freedom in the one case as in the other.

I am aware the Old Calvinist endeavors to conceal this bald fatalism, by making a distinction between moral and physical inability. Edwards repeatedly asserts that were the sinner's inability to do right physical, he could not be held blameworthy for not doing right; but, inasmuch as it is moral, the greater the inability the greater the sin, because it is depravity or sin which constitutes this inability. Here, it seems to me, is a distinction without a difference. If this moral inability is a mere reluctance, which his

will can overcome, the doctrine of contrary choice is conceded, and the whole Calvinistic theory is abandoned; but if, on the other hand, it is an inability he can not in the circumstances overcome, the distinction affords no relief.

Natural inability I understand to be the absence of natural power. Moral inability I understand to be the presence of some aversion which incapacitates one to use his natural power. And what is the difference? What boots it, if one is incapacitated to jump to the moon, whether it be in consequence of the absence of natural ability, or the presence of a hundred pound weight attached to his feet? Men may be silenced by such subtleties, but never satisfied. This doctrine of a necessitated will is the corner-stone on which rests the whole superstructure of Old Calvinism.

New Calvinism, on the other hand, rejects this whole theory of the will, as very thinly disguised fatalism. It holds, for illustration, that the thief, at the moment and in the identical circumstances in which he stole, was in full conscious possession of ability not to steal, as a fact, which challenges the assent of mankind, as an axiom which no sophistry can obscure; and it charges Old Calvinism with denying an intuitive truth, and with antagonizing all just blame and praise and accountability in the government of God.

Here, then, are the foundations of these two systems--the one a necessitated, the other a free will; the one fatalism, the other free agency. Keeping these in view, the respective superstructures will appear very simple.

I. The first timber on the Old Calvinistic foundation is the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty, which is a mere corollary of the doctrine of a necessitated will. It is this: God's control is as unlimited over the choices of mind as over the motions of matter. And, of course, He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, and foreordaineth, as absolutely in the field of mind as in that of matter, whatsoever cometh to pass, for there is nothing to hinder. Men never resist the Holy Ghost. The doctrine "leaves no room," as Dr. Curry well remarks, "for the action of any creature, except as moved and actuated by the power of God." The universe, with all its complications, material and moral, is one vast machine under the absolute, unopposed control of one Infinite will.

New Calvinism embraces the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty, but of a sovereignty limited by human freedom. It holds that God "hath endued the will with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced nor by any natural necessity determined to good or evil," and consequently that it can, and often does, resist God, and all the influence God can consistently bring to bear upon it, and stands fearfully in the way of the consummation of His highest wishes. While it admits that God foreknows and foreordains, either permissively or otherwise, whatsoever comes to pass, it holds that sin is an evil He deprecates, and allows only because it is inevitable to the best system of things He could devise.

2. But a step logically removed from the doctrine of Divine Decrees is that of Election and Reprobation. God's power over men's choices being, according to Old Calvinism, unlimited, he can, of course, secure the repentance and salvation of any man and of all men; but, for reasons inscrutable to us, He chooses to save only a part, and leave the rest to perish. All we can say is: "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight," and there we must leave the most mysterious and inexplicable fact of the moral world.

The New Calvinist, on the other hand, accepts the doctrine of Election and Reprobation, but finds the ultimate ground or reason of the distinction the doctrine implies, not, as does the Old Calvinist, in the divine will, but in the human will, precisely, he claims where the Great Teacher himself puts it, in such utterances as these: "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." "How oft would I have gathered thy children together . . . but ye would not."

He holds that God, unwilling any should perish, did, before the foundations of the world, predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, all whom he foresaw it would be possible to lead to repentance. Such constitute "the elect according to the foreknowledge of God." Others He left to perish, as a mother would abandon her child to the flames, after every effort to rescue it had failed. He holds that in the very mechanism of mind, God has environed Himself with limitations, which make the loss of souls, not on His part, a matter of choice, but of awful necessity. The idea that God, in the easy possession of power to save all His children, would allow a part to perish eternally, they find it difficult to harmonize with either his character or His Word.

3. A step farther brings us to the doctrine of Sin and Holiness. According to Old Calvinism, they are qualities primarily of the nature, the disposition, the relishes, or sensibilities from which choices proceed. It ascribes to sin and holiness a kind of substantive entity, which renders them capable of being created, transmitted, and propagated. Our first parents, according to it, were created holy, but, in consequence of the fall, their nature was "corrupted in all its faculties and parts," and this corrupt nature, which has passed from them into each individual of the race by the laws of heredity, is truly and properly sin, deserving the wrath and curse of God. Their sin consisted, primarily, not in the transgression of the law, but in the results of transgression

The New Calvinists admits that men have inherited a diseased and fallen physical, and probably an imperfect and dwarfed mental nature; but this he regards as a misfortune rather than a crime, as calling for pity rather than punishment--especially so, when these inherited diseases and passions are manfully resisted and baffled. Attaching blame and ill-deserving to unavoidable appetites and innate dispositions he regards as irrational and unjust. He therefore relegates all holiness and sin, good and ill-deserving, to the voluntary department of man's nature--makes them qualities of choices and states of the will, and of nothing else. All moral character attaches primarily, he claims, to the ultimate, permanent purpose of the soul--the fountain from which all subordinate choices and actions flow.

4. The next step in advance brings us to the question what is the heart, or seat of moral character? The Old Calvinist, putting moral character primarily, as we have seen, into the nature of man--into his relishes, affections, dispositions--in other words, into his sensibility, makes it the heart. The heart he defines as the seat of feeling, desires, tastes, propensities, and passions.

The New Calvinist, holding that moral character, blame and praiseworthiness attach only to the voluntary states and exercises, makes the will the heart. According to one the sensibility, according to the other the will, is the moral faculty.

5. Here we reach the great question, What is regeneration, or a change of heart? It is, answers Old Calvinism, a mysterious work wrought by the Holy Spirit in the sensibility of the sinner, either by the infusion of some

new principle, or the changing of some old. President Dwight defines it (Ser., vol. ii., p. 419) "as a relish for spiritual objects, communicated to the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost." Dr. Charles Hodge (see Theology, vol. ii., pp. 688-689) defines it as: 1st, "A physical change." (Using the word, doubtless, in its literal sense.) 2d, As "an irresistible change." 3d, As a "passive change." 4th, As "an instantaneous change." 5th, As "an act of sovereign grace, which can not be granted in sight or foresight of any good in the subject." 6th, As "a change in the production of which man in no way co-operates, any more than did the blind man in the restoration of his sight." 7th, As "one in which not even truth is a necessary instrumentality." This is the view substantially of all Old Calvinistic writers. They agree in making regeneration a work wrought by the direct power of the Holy Spirit in the affections, inclinations, impulses, and tastes of the sinner--in what the apostle calls the flesh--in something lying back of the will, from which, they claim, volitions and choices proceed.

There is probably no other doctrine in the whole Hyper-Calvinistic theology to which the New Calvinist takes more emphatic exceptions. He denies that such a change in the sensibility as this language indicates is regeneration, or any part of it, or in any way related to it. He claims that the sinner has all the powers and faculties requisite to submission and obedience to the divine law already, and needs no such change. Suppose, he asks, such a change were wrought in the sensibility of the liquor-seller, but from pecuniary considerations he should resist his better impulses and continue the traffic, is he regenerated, or morally improved thereby? Or, should he for the moment yield to his impulses, is he any the less a slave to passion and to self? Is he, by such a process, emancipated from the dominion of the flesh, or is he more hopelessly enslaved?

Regeneration the New Calvinist lifts into a higher and different department of man's nature. He makes it a change of moral character--change from ill to well-deserving--from blame to praise-worthiness, and he can not understand how a change wrought in the sensibility by another can render its object meritorious, or make a bad man a good man.

The law may punish a dishonest man, may force him to pay his debts, to restore to the owner what he has taken by fraud; but is he any the more

honest? Is his moral character in the slightest degree improved? Can anything done to him, for him, or in him by another, make him honest? What is honesty? One's own purpose, self-formed, to be honest. What is truthfulness? One's own purpose to be truthful, and can not be an other's. What is holiness? One's own purpose to obey God--nothing else. A change in the sensibility may act as motive to induce a man to become honest, but that such a change is honesty, or per se makes a man honest, is simply unthinkable. No being or thing can make a man honest, truthful, holy, but his own choice. A change of heart, then, is primarily a change of purpose--a change of which the sinner himself is both the agent and the object--a change which no being can make or approximate but the sinner himself.

Or, to be more specific, here is the flesh, warring against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. On the one side are the fleshly lusts, appetites, dispositions, and proclivities, or, if you please, a corrupted nature. On the other are the claims of God, the tender yearnings of the Divine Spirit, the pressure of conscience, and the dictates of duty and right. Neither has the slightest compulsory influence on the will--the power of each being only that of solicitation or persuasion. The will is free, but in case of every impenitent man it is in voluntary servitude to the flesh, and it's this that constitutes his depravity. His great need is emancipation.

Regeneration is not, in the view of the New Calvinist, any sugaring over or improvement of the flesh, or the introduction of any new relish. It is not an organic, miraculous or even mysterious change. It is the will's voluntary transfer of its allegiance from the flesh to the conscience, the truth, and to the Spirit of God, as a man transfers his allegiance from one hostile government to another.

6. These two theologies agree that regeneration is in every case secured by the Spirit of God, but they differ as to the nature of the influence He employs. One makes it physical, the other moral; one force, the other persuasion. The sword of the Spirit, according to one, is physical omnipotence; according to the other, it is the Word of God.

7. We now come to the great subject of Atonement; and here we find the views of these respective schools equally divergent. Both agree that "without the shedding of blood is no remission"--that God can be just in

justifying believing men only through the great sacrificial offering of Calvary. The divisive question is, How does this great transaction makes it safe to forgive sin?

The Old Calvinist places the necessity of this sacrifice in the Divine mind, its primal object being to placate the sense of divine justice. This was effected by inflicting upon Christ the penalty of sin, or its equivalent, which retributive justice demands. The divine law is honored, God is satisfied, and sin can be forgiven, because the punishment due to sins has been fully endured. In other words, Christ has purchased the pardon of his people by suffering in their stead the penalty due their sins.

It will be seen that this theory logically necessitates the doctrine, either of universal salvation, or that of limited atonement; for manifestly, if any one is lost for whom Christ died, the penalty in his case is twice inflicted--once upon the Lord Jesus Christ, his substitute, and then again upon himself. In this dilemma Old Calvinism adopts the latter theory, that of Limited Atonement, which is clearly set forth in the Westminster Confession and in the Savoy Declaration.

The fact that the sins of the elect have been adequately punished on the person of Christ would seem to be a sufficient ground for their acquittal. But Old Calvinists, not quite satisfied with this, have put another pillar under the superstructure of their hopes. They hold that Christ, who was under no obligations to obey the divine law on his own behalf, obeyed it perfectly; and that the merits of this obedience, or Christ's righteousness, as they are usually termed, are so imputed or credited over to his people that they stand legally acquitted. In other words, they are innocent on the ground that the law has been perfectly obeyed for them by their substitute.

The Old Calvinist must feel a "strong consolation:" (1.) In his case there has virtually been no violation of the divine law, no ill-deserving or sin, because through his accepted substitute he has perfectly obeyed.

(2.) The penalty of the law has been fully inflicted upon his substitute, as though it had not been obeyed at all. (3.) The debt, which had never been contracted, and which has been fully, adequately paid, is then graciously and freely pardoned.

The New Calvinist dissents from this theory of the atonement. To satisfy

retributive justice, and placate the divine feelings is not, in his view, the work accomplished or aimed at by the atonement. He denies the possibility of satisfying retributive justice by inflicting suffering on the innocent. Justice demands that the murderer shall himself be punished, and the idea of satisfying that feeling by allowing him to escape, and punishing somebody else in his stead, he deems a monstrous absurdity. This theory seems to him a reflection upon the divine character. It reminds him of the German prince, who professed his willingness to forgive an enemy as soon he was hung. He holds that the giving up--the foregoing--this feeling of indignation and sense of justice is the chief element of pardon.

He listens with amazement to the assertion that Christ was not under obligation to obey the divine law on his own behalf, as he would to the assertion that the President of the United States is not under obligation to obey the laws of his country, and consequently scouts the Romish idea of supererogation, or imputed righteousness.

Perhaps all we can safely affirm is, that the great tragedy of Calvary is an event which can be substituted for the sinner's punishment, because equally efficacious in honoring the law, and sustaining the divine authority. But many New Calvinists, a little more specific, claim that the atonement pardons no one, saves no one, lays God under obligation to save no one, but that in suffering and death Christ "is set forth to declare the righteousness of God for the remission of sins . . . that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." That is, the setting forth the righteousness of God, or the revelation which the sufferings and death of Christ have made of the character of God, is what makes him just in justifying. In other words, Christ has so inundated the universe with the knowledge of God, and so established confidence in his compassion and justice, he can pardon on his own terms, and the intelligent creation will join in the acclaim, "Just and righteous are thy ways, thou King of Saints," and no being will be offended.

To have forgiven the attack made upon Fort Sumter, previous to the war, would justly have subjected our Government to the charge of cowardice and pusillanimity, but after the sacrifice of three hundred thousand lives, and four billions of treasure to maintain its integrity and honor, it forgave the crime, and no such thought has ever been entertained. It was the revelation the war made of its character, which rendered it safe for our

Government to pardon. May it not be the revelations of a greater event which have made God "just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus?"

8. In no respect are the two systems more divergent than in the instructions they give the inquirer for the way of life. The language of Old Calvinism to a lost sinner, if logically consistent, is this: You can not, by your exertions, or prayers, or anything you can do, either good or bad, effect in the slightest degree your future destiny. That, before the foundation of the world, was unalterably fixed. If one of the elect, your repentance, faith, and salvation are assured, --you can not be lost. If not, you can not be saved. "God, according to the secret counsel and good pleasure of his own will, hath either chosen you unto everlasting glory," or He "hath ordained you unto dishonor and wrath," "without any foresight of faith or good works, or any other thing in you as conditions or causes moving him thereto." This ordination is unalterable and eternal. You are but a helpless waif on the sea, and can only watch and wait and see which way the great pulses of things are carrying you; and millions under such instructions are waiting, and perishing too.

The ambassador of Christ, this system bids preach the Word, whatever that may mean, but affords no hint as to the relation existing between the preached Word and the regeneration of men. "Regeneration," says Dr. Hodge, "is a change in which not even truth is a necessary instrumentality."

The instruction which New Calvinism logically gives the inquirer may be found scattered throughout the pages of the Old and New Testament.

I have in this paper endeavored to classify theologies, not theologians. The two systems I have so imperfectly delineated seemed to me to be two paths through the realm of metaphysical theology, the one or the other of which, in its general outlines, we must, if self-consistent, adopt. If we are satisfied that the choices of the will are necessitated by states of the mind lying back of them, let us stand manfully by the whole Calvinistic system, with its arbitrary election, its imputed righteousness, its inherited sin, its forced regeneration, its limited atonement, and its changeless, remorseless fatalism. But if, on the other hand, we are satisfied that the choices of the will are free, let us repudiate the name Calvinist as one to which we have not the slightest claim, discard the Westminster

Confession of Faith, and relieve ourselves of the burden and odium of all seeming indorsement of a system of doctrines which the intelligence and piety of the nineteenth century have relegated to the past, and let us adopt a symbol of faith so rational and biblical as to commend itself to the conscience of every man in the sight of God.

## II. THE CONSCIENCE

An accurate definition of conscience, and a clear apprehension of its functions, will afford, I think, a pretty satisfactory solution of most of the problems connected with the subject.

1. The theory that there is no such faculty, that what is termed conscience is the "creature of education," or a mere opinion that some actions are right and others wrong, is evidently erroneous, as it takes no account of the idea of right and wrong which makes such judgments possible. To pronounce an action right or wrong, there must be in our minds some standard of right, with which we compare it; for all we mean by the assertions "this is right," "that is wrong" is this accords, and that discords with such a standard. A definition which leaves out this primary idea is plainly superficial.

2. A popular but loose definition of conscience makes it the faculty which decides upon the rightness and wrongness of external actions. This definition is manifestly incorrect, and is the source of most of the misapprehensions pertaining to the subject. If any truth is established, it is that external actions have no character of their own, that they simply reflect that of choices, and therefore do not come within the purview of the conscience. The conscience is the arbiter only of intentions or motives. It approves of right intentions and of nothing else, and disapproves of wrong intentions and of nothing else; the question whether this or that action is right is a mere matter of classification, made by the understanding, the faculty of all others the most fallible. Here lies the error of Robert South, Pascal, John Foster, and others, who regard conscience as fallible, erring and educable. They ascribe to it judgments and imperfections which belong to an entirely different faculty.

3. A more discriminating definition makes conscience the soul's sense of

right and wrong, in the sphere of its own intentions. Yet this definition is, I think, too narrow. Conscience certainly perceives the quality of choices not our own. We are as sure that a benevolent purpose is right, and a malevolent purpose is wrong, in our neighbor as in ourselves. The sphere of conscience reaches beyond the limits of our choices; its domain is the whole field of morals.

4. The definition of Joseph Cook, which makes conscience the faculty which perceives and feels rightness and obligatoriness in choices, also strikes me as defective, in that it makes conscience a complex faculty, including a function of both the intelligence and sensibility. In the interests of clear thinking, I am compelled to protest against yoking under one name faculties so dissimilar. I, by far, prefer making conscience purely intellectual, and the feelings which come from obeying or disobeying its behests simply effects--the one the faculty which inflicts the blow, the other the one which feels the pain.

The definition which thus limits conscience strikes me as the more simple,--the one in best accord with the literal meaning of the word, and the one sanctioned by common usage. We often speak, I am aware, of a tender, a peaceful, and of an aching conscience, as though it were the faculty itself that feels; but we just as often use the word where there is nothing present but the pure intellection. We call that conscience which advises us of the quality of other men's choices, and of the quality of our own before they are made, where no feeling exists. We are constantly applying the name to the pure perceptive faculty, and I can see no reason for complicating the subject by including in our definition anything more.

Another objection to this unnatural union is the diverse effects of wrong doing on these two faculties. Persistence in sin benumbs and cauterizes the one, but produces no such effect upon the other. The man who could commit murder with as little remorse as once he could steal a pin, had as undimmed a perception of right and wrong as ever he had. He was as keenly alive to any injustice done to himself as when a child. That sensibility benumbed and diseased under painful and protracted condemnation, and that clear perceptive eye in his soul, which no repetition of crime could cloud, and no deep of depravity could obscure, are certainly different things, and should be designated by different names.

No practical error is concealed in such phrases as "seared conscience," "perverted conscience," etc. In common parlance they are admissible, but strictly there is no such thing as a seared or a perverted conscience. Conscience is a sentinel in the soul, whose eye nothing can blur, and whose testimony nothing can pervert. All the other strugglings of the world are as nothing to the abortive efforts men are making to stifle its voice, or bribe it into an alliance with sin--a consummation, which, could it be effected, would eliminate hell, and sin, and nearly all suffering from the universe.

Again, all the functions usually ascribed to the conscience may readily be resolved into the one simple exercise of perceiving. (1.) It gives us the idea of right or obligation. (2.) Like a king it seems to command and forbid, to praise and blame, to promise reward and threaten punishment. (3.) It diffuses through the soul, as its behests are obeyed or disobeyed, the tenderest joy or the most poignant suffering men ever experience; but what more is all this than the vivid idea of duty, guilt, danger, merit and demerit, and their natural results involved in that dread idea of obligation? Then if all the functions of conscience may be resolved into the one exercise of perceiving, as I think they may, why not define it as the perceptive faculty?

I make conscience the faculty which perceives moral distinctions,--or, as the reader has already inferred, I identify the conscience with the reason. The faculty, in my view, which gives us necessary, absolute and self-evident truths, those fundamental postulates of the mind which lie at the basis of all knowledge, and make thinking and reasoning possible, and the conscience are the same. It is the faculty which give us the mathematical axioms, and in this particular we call it the mathematical reason; it gives us the ideal of beauty, and in this we call it the æsthetical reason; it gives us also the idea of right and obligation, and in this we term it the ethical reason, or the conscience.

I define conscience, then, as the ethical reason, or reason in the sphere of morals. I put the idea of right into the same category with that of space, and time, and cause, and God, as one of those intuitional verities, which challenge the soul's assent, and can not be doubted. It possesses all the characteristics of these intuitional truths:

1. It is unique and absolute; nothing resembles it, nothing can represent

it. It can neither be simplified, defined, analyzed, or conveyed to a mind not already in possession of it. Whence comes it? How does the child know with such certainty that intentional cruelty is wrong? It must have come from within, it must be the soul's own spontaneity.

2. This idea is universal. There is not a rational being who does not understand such words as "right" and "wrong," "ought" and "ought not," or who for a moment averts his eye from their dread import. Empirical truths may be forgotten, but who ever forgets that injustice and falsehood are wrong? Make the most bewildered drunkard understand that some one has frauded you, or abused a child, and so soon as he can articulate the word, he will pronounce the deed wrong. The man whose hands are reddest in murder lives in spite of himself, in the awful presence of this idea. No flight can escape it, no exorcism cast it out. It will remain forever, a part himself, either as a singing angel or as the worm that dieth not.

3. This idea in all minds, and wherever found, is the same. Our differences about right and wrong are only seeming, never real. They relate not to the idea of right itself, but to its applications. The heathen mother, in justifying the immolation of her child, refers it to a principle we all recognize as binding. The Great Spirit, she says, or the highest good, requires the sacrifice, making it evident that it is not a question of right, but of mere classification, about which we differ from that benighted mother. The same is true in all our disputes about right and wrong. No two rational beings ever did, or ever can, differ about them. We all, consciously or unconsciously, assume the same standard, and bow before the same umpire. We are not here in this universe afloat; there are landmarks which no sophistry or depravity can alter or remove.

4. This idea of right is the Moral Law revealed in the Old and New Testament Scriptures, not in its details and applications, but in its essence and principle. The law proclaimed on Mount Sinai, and epitomized fifteen hundred years later, by the Son of God, is a transcript of this wondrous idea found in all minds. That divine law is but the demand and meaning of this dread idea, translated by the Author of the Bible, into human tongue, and by him promulgated as the rule of human duty.

I express substantially the same thought in saying God made man in His own image, and wrote upon his soul the law of his own divine nature--the

law of eternal rectitude--and then in the Revelation He has made, re-wrote it in human language, thus giving it on two tables, the tables of stone, and the "fleshly tables of the heart." Man is a law unto himself, his conscience is a Mount Sinai, voicing forth unceasingly the divine commands.

The identity of the law given in the conscience with that given in the Sacred Records is too apparent to need extensive proof.

(1.) It is assumed on every page of those Records. From Genesis to Revelation the terms righteousness and holiness are used interchangeably--doing right is everywhere made the equivalent of obeying God. The law, they assure us, "has gone out through all the world," and "there is no speech nor language where its voice is not heard;" and they impose upon every rational being, be he savage or civilized, by infinite sanctions, the duty of obedience. If the law of the Bible has not its duplicate in every rational soul, or does not lie somewhere within the vision of every man, where is the justice of such requirements and such threatenings?

(2.) This identity accords with the convictions of men everywhere. Every man, whatever his definition of sin and holiness, instinctively assumes that doing right is all God requires, and doing wrong is all He forbids; that this is all that, in justice, can be required of any rational being. Were the Bible to demand more, it would, I think, array against itself the honest convictions of mankind.

(3.) This identity is a very obvious truth--one which has won many an infidel from his errors, and assured him of the divine origin of the Sacred Word. Read to the savage or the civilized: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbor;" it challenges his assent; he bows before its authority and confesses his obligations to obey. In the dark hours of my own history, this fact has been to me what the cable is to the ship in the storm. I have recognized the law revealed in the Bible as the mandate of my own reason, and felt assured that it could be neither unsafe nor unwise to do what my higher nature condemned me for omitting.

(4.) This fact is manifest from the perfect correlation between the Bible and the conscience. The choices which satisfy the claims of the one perfectly satisfy those of the other. He who yields to either yields to both. Hence the peace passing understanding of him whose heart is in

harmony with the precepts of the Divine Word, and the condemnation and suffering of him who tramples them beneath his feet. This the murderer has done, and how wretched! At midnight he has imbrued his hands in the blood of his fellow, he has buried the corpse, and to the best of his ability concealed the evidence of the deed; and now he retires to rest--but how restless! How like an angry maniac he tosses on his pillow! Let me lie down on a bed of fire, rather than feel the agony which wrings his heart.

"Sin is a pang where more than madness lies--  
A worm that can not sleep and never dies."

"He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul."

Why does the soul thus shrink and shriek over its violations of the divine law? Because the divine law is the soul's law; the former is the mere transcript of the latter, and can no more be violated without damaging the soul than can physical law without damaging the body.

It is not claimed that conscience gives us the Moral Law in its details and applications. It simply enjoins the great principle of love. Make the welfare of being thy supreme pursuit, is its mandate. Yet this mandate, while it does not specify, really includes all the applications of the divine law, as the generic includes the specific, and obedience to it involves and necessitates obedience to them. This is manifest from two facts: (1.) This choice of the good of being, like every other, must either be carried into execution or abandoned; (2.) The execution of this choice must include every possible duty, for it is not conceivable that doing anything but good can be obligatory. Hence love is the fulfilling of the law. In other words, following the dictates of conscience is the whole duty of man.

This somewhat startling assertion is a logical necessity. The conscience is the faculty, the only one which perceives obligation; and, as there can be no obligation which is not perceived, there can be no obligation other than it reveals. Hence meeting its claims comprises every possible duty.

I have, I think, in this paper established the fact that the idea of right, unique and incommunicable, identical with the Moral Law, universal, but the same in all minds, is a rational intuition, and the conscience which reveals it is the ethical reason.

It is the faculty which makes man accountable, lifts him into the solemn regions of the moral world, into relationship with the unseen and eternal, and exposes him to the peril of infinite issues. We are not prepared to say with Cousin: "Reason makes its appearance in us, though it is not ourselves, and can not be confounded with our personality. Reason is impersonal. Whence, then, comes this wonderful guest within us? and what is the reason which enlightens us without belonging to us? This principle is God."<sup>1</sup> We can not with this great thinker, make reason a synonym with "enthusiasm," [Greek spelling], it savors too strongly of Pantheism; but we must admit, as the name [Greek word], knowing with, jointly knowing, suggests, there is the semblance of duality about it. It appears in close relationship with another, in whose awful name it speaks. To say the least, it is God's viceregent. God stands behind it, almost within the field of consciousness, and invests it with his own authority. Hence men cower and tremble in its presence, and fear it more than all other tribunals. It affords us the great proof of the divine existence. From conscience to God is less than a logical step.

The so-often mooted question: Is conscience infallible? do its behests in every case accord with absolute right? has already been answered. If the view presented in this paper be correct, the question is: Are the intuitional affirmations, the fundamental postulates of the reason, which the mind is incapacitated to doubt, true? Are the mathematical axioms, are what we term first, self-evident and necessary truths, verities? In other words, are truths true? The question involves the same absurdity as the question: "Is the North Star north?" If the deep, solemn utterances of the conscience may not be relied upon as infallible--if, like the hands on our dial plates, it is sometimes right and sometimes wrong--nothing may be relied upon; the foundations are gone, the moral world is a vast chaos, and man's nature is a stupendous lie. "An erring conscience," says Kant, "is a chimera."

Is conscience a perfect guide? This is a different question. The Word of God may be infallible, but not a perfect guide in crossing the Atlantic or laying an ocean cable. In one sphere the Bible is a perfect guide; in

another no guide at all. So with the conscience. In its own sphere, the realm of choices and motives, it is a perfect guide. Here it falls into no error, makes no mistakes. Choices which accord with it are perfect, and as all moral character lies in choices, the moral character of him who obeys the dictates of his conscience, is perfect. He omits no duty, commits no sin. A conscientious sin is an absurdity, a self-contradiction.

Outside this realm, in the application of this law of right to the routine of daily life, we are in the sphere of another faculty--the enfeebled, darkened understanding, and conscience ceases to be guide. Hence mistakes and blunders lie in the daily experience of every conscientious man. There is the same liability to misapply the axioms of conscience there is to misapply the principle of causation, or the axioms of mathematics. But such errors no more invalidate the authority of the former than they do that of the latter, nor do they necessarily involve any more moral delinquency.

Can the conscience be enlightened or improved? In effect it can. One's knowledge may be increased, his understanding cultured and the field for the application of the law of benevolence widened indefinitely. His sensibility may become more and more sensitive and responsive to its dictates; and perhaps the faculty itself, like others, is susceptible of growth, but its affirmations are already perfect, and no increment of light or darkness can change or modify them. The conscience of the most uninstructed Esquimau who shivers in Arctic snows is as unerringly perfect as that of the most erudite teacher of our theological schools.

This theory of the infallibility of conscience is often, I am aware, abused. It is made to countenance the somewhat prevalent notion that believing an action right makes it right, whatever the motive from which it proceeds--that if one is sincere, it is of little moment what he believes, or does, or what religion he embraces; for whatever he does in the belief that it is right--must be right.

There is some truth in this view and a great deal of error. Actions borrow whatever character they possess from the choices they execute. If one's choice is benevolent, or if he honestly intends to do right, his conduct, however imperfect, is right. But actions may be objectively right, with no such intention behind them. Nay, actions, even outwardly generous and philanthropic, may flow from the basest motives. Are such actions

virtuous? They are often so regarded. Just here the millions deceive themselves. They deem their prayers and charities pleasing to God, and take the momentary feelings of self-complacency which such actions excite, to be the approbation of conscience, although their motives are profoundly selfish. This is a grave mistake. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Thinking an act right does not necessarily make it so; for its character, as every one on reflection must admit, depends upon the motive behind it. "Make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt."

But if it is not always safe to do what we deem right, must we sometimes omit doing right, or do what we deem wrong? No, the only safe course is to become honest and always purpose to do right; then the stream like the fountain will be pure, the fruit like the tree will be good. No act is right, not even bestowing one's goods to feed the poor, which does not proceed from a benevolent choice, and no one enjoys the first thrill of an approving conscience until he bows his heart to the law of love, the supreme law of the universe.

Is this the error into which the great Apostle of the Gentiles was, in the days of his impenitency, betrayed? Both the old and new versions make him say: "I verily thought with myself I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Does he mean to assert, as by many understood, that in persecuting the church of God he was following the dictates of his conscience? If so, one of two inferences is inevitable: either his persecutions were right, or his conscience was wrong, and should have been disregarded and resisted--either of which is too monstrous to be accepted, unless forced upon us.

But is there no escape from this dilemma? All the passage can possibly mean is, he thought it duty to persecute the church of God, he put his persecutions into the same category with his prayers and alms-giving, and thought them, as thousands of wicked men think their good deeds, pleasing to God. But does this prove that they were pleasing to God--prove that there was a benevolent choice behind them, or that he was actuated by a supreme purpose to do right? No, it proves that "a deceived heart had turned him aside," and is perfectly consistent with the theory that conscience was all the while lifting its voice, like a low funeral cry, against the madness and murder in his heart.

But does the passage mean as much as this? The word rendered "ought" is used more than an hundred times in the New Testament. It conveys the idea of necessity, and in a great majority of cases is translated "must" or "must needs." All the Apostle necessarily and probably says is: "I verily thought"--in order to subserve some ends, perhaps his own reputation, or the national honor or religion--"I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." There is no necessity for supposing the persecuting Saul intended to do right, or had the slightest regard for conscience or duty.

But whatever might have been the thought of Saul of Tarsus, the great Apostle was a wiser man. He had the profoundest confidence in the infallibility of conscience. "I exercise myself," he says, "to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man always." "I have lived [since my conversion] in all good conscience until this day." The wealth of the world could not induce him to violate his conscience to the slightest degree, and he had no fears of being misdirected by it.

Another inference equally erroneous, drawn from the infallibility of conscience, is that the Bible may be dispensed with, and a happy immortality secured under the guidance of this unerring faculty. If the inference is that, one within whose reach the Sacred Volume has never fallen, may, by the aid of the Holy Spirit reach heaven, guided by this inner light, we concede its truthfulness. Abel, and Enoch, and Abraham, and a host of worthies have been saved without the Bible. So doubtless have more or less of every age. But this fact affords no encouragement to the man who, having the Divine Word, willfully turns his back upon it. With its divine claims, and the myriad proofs which must fall within the knowledge of every man of ordinary intelligence, sustaining these claims, to treat it with other than profound and child-like reverence, is ipso facto repudiating the leadership of conscience and disregarding its most sacred behests.

Our subject throws light upon the relation which morality and the religion of Christ sustain to each other. Morality, in its true sense, is obedience to the law of right, found in the conscience. Religion, pure and undefiled, is obedience to the Moral Law found in the Bible. But these two laws are the same, therefore, religion and morality are the same. A religion which does not involve an upright, conscientious, and pure life, and a morality which does not involve obedience to the just claims of God, and the

acceptance of Christ, when revealed to the soul, are equally spurious. There is an outward conformity to right which passes for morality, as there is an outward culture which passes for politeness; both are valuable, but neither secures the favor of God or the approbation of conscience.

This subject throws light upon the relation of reason and the Christian religion to each other. Infidels, in their warfare upon the Bible, have ever claimed reason as an ally, and perhaps this claim has received a quasi sanction in the opposition of Christian men to what is termed Rationalism. But no claim can be more unfounded. The reason and Christianity are in eternal concord, and can never be arrayed against each other. The great under timber of the one--the moral law--is the ever present revelation of the other. Both voice the same language, and impose upon men the same rule of life. Christians, in every age, so far from conceding this infidel claim, have regarded the reason as the bulwark of their faith, the hiding place of its power, and have ever carried upon their banners the challenge, "Come, let us reason together."

The opposition of intelligent Christian men to Rationalism is not, I think, an unwillingness to make reason final authority on all questions of religion and morals, coming within its purview. This all men do, for the sufficient reason they can not avoid doing it. They do it when they accept the Bible as a revelation from God, and reject the Koran. The old Patriarch arraigned even the divine conduct before the tribunal of reason. "Shall not," he reverently asks, "the Judge of all the earth do right?" His idea of right was the standard to which he knew God must conform his ways to be just. The same is assumed by the heavenly host in their song, "Just and righteous are thy ways, thou King of Saints," and no higher tribute ever reaches the Infinite ear. God himself appeals to the same tribunal in the question: "Are not my ways equal?" and in his condescending offer to reason with men. It is not true Rationalism which good men oppose, but a Rationalism which rejects authoritative teaching--rules the supernatural out of the Bible, discredits whatever fails to tally with a perverted understanding, and stands as the equivalent to unbelief in Revelation. To concede any antagonism between reason and Christianity has ever been regarded, by Christian men, as the act of a traitor or an enemy.

Does our subject throw any light upon the great question, What is the

foundation of Obligation?

The law of obligation is plain; the Saviour announced it in the great command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thy neighbor as thyself"--in other words, make the welfare of being thy supreme end. This all intelligent beings are bound to do. The question is, Why are they bound to do it?

To this question almost innumerable answers have been returned. One reads thus: "We ought to choose the welfare of being, or to be benevolent, because God requires it." In other words, the will of God is the foundation of obligation.

Is this so? Is benevolence obligatory because God requires it; or, does He require it because it is obligatory? Which is the logical antecedent, the Will of God, or the obligation? Had there been no command would there be no obligation? or, were the command abrogated would all obligations to help and bless each other cease? The will of God is evidently not the ultimate ground of obligation, for the question instantly occurs, Why ought we to obey God? But the obvious and fatal objection to this theory is, it destroys the moral character of God, by rendering it impossible for him to do otherwise than right, and thus making him as undeserving of our praises as is the sun, which can not do otherwise than shine.

A better statement is, "benevolence is obligatory because it is right." But this is mere tautology. It is saying, we ought to love because it is obligatory, or we ought because we ought--in other words, obligation is the ground of obligation.

A better answer still is the one so ably advocated by Professor Finney [see his Systematic Theology], to wit: We ought to choose the welfare of being because it is valuable. But this answer is far from being satisfactory, for the question recurs, Why ought we to choose the valuable? and leaves the problem no nearer a solution.

I would prefer to say the nature of things is the foundation of obligation. But this is only saying, we ought to love because things are what they are--in other words, we ought to love because we ought; and really this is the substance, in the last analysis, of every answer which has been given; and if the position taken in this paper be correct, it is the only one which can be given.

The obligation to love, we have shown to be an ultimate and absolute truth. Then in asking for its ground, we fall into the absurdity of asking for something more ultimate than the ultimate, deeper than the deepest, beyond the farthest--for the ground of something, which by definition stands alone, and has no ground. When a moral being sees good, he is bound to prefer it to evil. This is one of the eternal verities of the universe. It is so, it eternally has been, and will be so. This is all we know, and all we can say about it. To ask why is as unphilosophical and useless as to ask why space, or time, or God exists, or why a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. When we come to such questions we reach the boundaries, not of knowledge, but the absolute boundaries of thought. It is well to bear this in mind, and avoid "foolish and unlearned questions which gender strifes."

Our subject, finally, affords a striking illustration of the benevolence of our Heavenly Father. The divine law was copied from man's moral constitution. "Do thyself no harm" is its heavenly injunction. The mind is a harp of a thousand strings. Patterned after the Non-created Intelligence, it is fearfully and wonderfully made. Its capacities and susceptibilities, its delicate and awful strings, its surpassing beauty, and its power of an endless life fit it for companionship with Him in whose similitude it was made. This mind, God would have rise in forever expanding beauty and bliss; but its laws must be obeyed, or its beauty will be changed to deformity, its bliss to agony, its existence to an evil. It will become--

"A wandering mass of shapeless flame,  
A pathless comet and a curse--

The menace of the universe."

To prevent this, its Maker has translated its laws into human tongue, and enjoined obedience by the sanction of three worlds. Who will not exclaim, "Just and righteous are thy ways, thou King of Saints." The religion of Christ is not arbitrary, unnatural, ghostly; it is health, harmony, rest, and peace unto the soul. To the weary, diseased, and despairing its glad question is, Wilt thou be made whole?

### III. VIRTUE, FROM A SCIENTIFIC STANDPOINT

THE term virtue is used in two slightly different senses: (1.) As a quality of a mental exercise or state. (2.) As a mental exercise or state itself. Using the word in the latter sense, I propose to inquire what is virtue, or what state or exercise of the mind does the word represent--a question which, though much discussed, is still unsettled, and to-day divides theology into two great schools.

Moral exercises--such as are virtuous or the opposite--"are such," says the great Edwards, "as are attended with the desert or worthiness of either blame or praise." "A moral action," says Professor Cochran, "is (1.) one of which it may rationally be said, it ought or ought not to be done; or one which a moral being may justly be required to do, or forbear doing: (2.) One for which the agent is blame or praiseworthy, and therefore deserving reward or punishment." In other words, it is an exercise to which obligation pertains, or one which accords or discords with Moral Law.

Virtue then is identical with love, the great imperative of that law. "All virtue," says Edwards, "may be resolved into love for others, God, or his creatures." "All virtue," says Dr. Dwight, "is summed up in the fulfillment of these two commands: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." "Love," says Dr. N. W. Taylor, "is the sum of God's requirements, as it fully meets and satisfies the claims of God upon men." On these two commands--says the Great Teacher--"hang the whole law and the prophets." "Love is the fulfilling of the law," is the declaration of the inspired apostle. Love and virtue, then, I shall use as interchangeable terms, and my inquiry is, What is their exact scientific import?

Mental phenomena are divided into two classes--free and necessary. An exercise is free when the agent could, at the time and in the circumstances, do otherwise; necessary, when at the time and in the circumstances he could not do otherwise. This distinction is perfect. Every exercise of the human mind is either free or necessary. No one can be both.

In which of these classes resides the moral element? "In both, but primarily in the latter," answers the Hyper-Calvinist--putting, as he does, moral character into something back of the will, and making sin and holiness entities which may be created and transmitted. The question is a vital one: What does God require and forbid, and for what does he call the sinful soul to repentance?--one in reference to which no Christian teacher should remain in doubt.

Do we find the moral element in necessary phenomena? Are exercises which could by no possibility be avoided either good or ill-deserving? Is a child justly punished for remembering the experience of yesterday, or for the prevalence of the Asiatic cholera, or for any event in which it had neither choice nor voluntary agency? By definition, a necessary act is one the agent could not in the circumstances avoid; to say he ought is saying he ought to perform, not a miracle, that is thinkable, but an impossibility, that to which infinite power is inadequate. If there be a first and self-evident truth, challenging the assent of all minds, and never questioned outside the domain of theology, it is that ability is commensurate with obligation--that men are responsible for only such exercises as they could avoid. "Ask," says Professor Stuart, "all courts of justice from the highest to the lowest . . . Ask all legislative bodies who have any sense of justice, whether they make laws which render guilty those who never voluntarily transgress them, and they give but one answer. Indeed, there never has been, is not, and, from the nature of the case, there never can be any difference of opinion on this point of personal guilt."<sup>2</sup> "No man," says Professor Harris, "can blame or praise himself, or feel responsible for any event which is in no way dependent on his own free will."<sup>3</sup> I will not insult the intelligence of my readers by fortifying a position so obvious, but will assume, as an axiomatic truth, that only free exercises can be either right or wrong, sinful or holy.

To what department of the mind do free exercises belong? Is freedom an attribute of the intelligence? Is perceiving, thinking, believing, remembering, knowing, or any other mere intellection a free exercise? Let us test the question: The agent, we will suppose, stands with open eyes, gazing into the cloudless sky. In these precise circumstances can he avoid perceiving it to be blue? The act of gazing and that of perceiving are distinct. The former is admittedly free. Is the latter? Evidently nothing is more necessary. In the full possession of his powers he remembers

what occurred yesterday. Is there any more freedom here? Certainly not. With his present knowledge he believes the earth is round. Can he believe otherwise? He knows the whole is greater than a part. Can he avoid knowing this, or cease knowing it, as he can cease talking or writing? Is any intellectual exercise free? No: our cognitions, no sane man can doubt, fall into the category of the most iron necessity. Therefore they do not, and can not, involve the moral element.

We control, to a limited extent, it is readily admitted, the conditions of these intellections. We can gaze into the sky or decline doing so. We can turn attention to or away from truth, and render ourselves indirectly responsible for perceptions and opinions; but to attach moral character to anything beyond voluntary complicity with them would indicate a great lack of discrimination.

Is freedom an attribute of the sensibility? That feelings are helpful or hurtful, that they are a pretty accurate index of moral character, there is no doubt; but do they fall into the category of free and moral phenomena? The word love, I am aware, is used, used correctly, to designate emotions of fondness, attachment, etc. The mother, as she presses her babe to her breast, says, "I love it." She does love her darling; but are these emotions of the nature of virtue? Are they the kind of love the moral law requires? If exercised supremely toward God, and equally toward men, would they satisfy its claims?

Let us apply the test: I put my hand into the fire. The act is free; is the feeling of pain which results also free? In the precise circumstances in which I suffer, can I avoid suffering? Certainly not. No event more clearly falls into the category of necessity. Consequently, whatever may be said of the act, the feeling can be neither right nor wrong. I turn my attention to some object of suffering, and feelings of pity result. Is not the relation here between the act and feeling precisely the same? I call to mind some wrong to which I have been subjected, and feelings of indignation are aroused, plainly by a law just as necessary. I look upon some object of beauty or deformity, and feelings of admiration or aversion instantly arise; and as the current of thought changes, so changes the current of feeling, with as little fealty to my will as the flow of the river from its source. I can put into operation causes, doubtless, which will arrest or increase these feelings, as I can causes which will divert the current of the stream; but certainly moral character can be ascribed to nothing but the voluntary act.

So fixed and necessary is this relation between thought and feeling, the skillful artist can sit down and play upon the strings of another's soul, evoking from that wondrous instrument melody or discord, as he can from his cathedral organ; but the emotion and the music are equally devoid the free, consequently, the moral element.

The drunkard is indirectly responsible for his appetite--for it is the result of his own conduct; but it is in the conduct exclusively the moral element resides. When the intoxicant is swallowed, the whole guilt is incurred. Were the Divine Hand at that moment to interfere, and set aside the effect, his ill desert would neither be increased nor diminished. As well call the fire the incendiary kindles sinful as the drunkard's appetite, or any other appetite or feeling human beings experience.

But are not anger and envy, revenge and hate wrong, and fortitude and patience, and complacency in goodness right? They are desirable or undesirable, and therefore it is right or wrong to cherish them, as it is to harbor stolen property. Many of these passions also involve the voluntary element. Revenge, e.g., is a purpose as well as a feeling; but it is to the former only moral character attaches. We look in vain for the voluntary or the moral element among the phenomena of the intellect or of the sensibility. Our intellections and emotions are in the circumstances necessarily what they are, and can be neither good nor ill-deserving.

May not feeling enter as an essential element into virtue? Is not the love which fulfills the law the blending of the emotional and voluntary factors? This is the generally accepted view. "Loving God supremely," says Albert Barnes, "is fixing the affections supremely upon Him." Here are both factors, and as they are so inseparably allied, perhaps no practical harm comes of this definition. Still it is scientifically incorrect, and attended with insuperable difficulties.

(1.) As feeling is in itself a necessary phenomenon, and as no combination can change its nature or invest it with the moral element, it is difficult to understand how it can become a constituent part of virtue.

(2.) This definition makes moral character of all things the most unstable and fluctuating. It comes, and goes, and changes, as the ever restless feelings change. The cloud on the sky and the spray on the river are not more obedient to every surrounding influence.

(3.) Feeling, if an essential element of virtue--must be present in every virtuous act. An honest purpose to obey God, if they are absent, is not obedience. The tired and worn spirit, incapable through exhaustion or paroxysms of pain, of any particular emotions, is incapable of virtue, or any exercise acceptable to God.

(4.) If emotions are essential to love, it is not always easy to exercise this virtue. Can any one tell us how to love our enemies, if this be the meaning of the word; or how to put forth any feeling worthy the name toward the traducer, the evil doer, or the "evil one;" or how the hardened sinner or the dying impenitent, whose half-delirious thought can hardly reach the idea of God, can exercise toward him gratitude or affection? Would any intelligent man urge him to attempt it? Yet God requires of him supreme love even then and there, and his destiny depends upon rendering it.

(5.) We are required to love God with all the heart and mind and might. This certainly implies feelings, if they are an essential part of love, up to the very verge of one's capacities--a degree which would unfit him for the ordinary duties of life, and soon destroy life itself. Is suicide what the great commandment of the law requires? Christ loved the Father with all his soul; was he constantly wrought up to the highest point of emotion? No.

"Christ had his sorrows when he shed  
Those tears, Jerusalem, for thee;

And when his trembling followers fled,  
In his dark hour of agony."

And he had his joys. He was the subject of all the variety and diversity of feelings which ordinarily play over the field of human consciousness; yet when roused like the billowy sea, and when calm as the summer noon, he loved with equal and perfect strength. Surely his love was deeper than the fluctuations and spray of emotion.

(6.) The law requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, or to love

every one with given, and consequently equal, strength; and if emotion is an essential element of love, to exercise equal affection for all. The wife is required to feel the same attachment to the stranger and the debauchee she does to her husband, and the loved ones who call her mother. All the special endearments which bind families together are forbidden, and the sweetest, holiest relations of this life are legislated against.

(7.) Just now it seems to me it is the ethical element of our religion, rather than the emotional, which needs to be emphasized. The latter is cheap and very common. Ancient Israel while "fasting for strife and debate," "took delight in approaching to God;" the word of the prophet, while they did it not, fell on their ear "like a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument;" and few now can gaze out on the wild bright spring or autumn day, or on the wilder and more mysterious night, spreading its great map of stars above them, without emotions of reverence and gratitude toward the Great Artificer; and fewer still can go to dark Gethsemane, where the Man of Sorrows "weeps in blood," without kindred feelings. Multitudes take this mere sentimentalism for Christian experience, and make its reproduction the ne plus ultra of Christian endeavor. The Christian teacher should avoid definitions which foster delusions so common and fatal.

Virtue or love resides in the will exclusively. Nothing is right or wrong, sinful or holy, blame or praiseworthy but its exercises and states. "The element of morality," says President Fairchild, "is found in the will alone; this is a necessary and intuitive judgment, and must be accepted as an axiom in morals."<sup>4</sup> "The love," says Professor Harris, "which it [the Law] requires is not natural affection; it is not emotion, or desire, or passion; it is the free choice of the supreme object of service."<sup>5</sup> How perfectly this accords with the formal definitions of the Sacred Word! "This is the love of God, that ye keep his commandments." "This is the love of God that ye walk after his commandments." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "Let us not love in word and tongue, but in deed and in truth." "Love is the fulfilling of the law." This truth is woven into the very texture of the Bible. It stands forth on every page. It is not the thinker, the feeler, but the doer who is justified or condemned. There is not in the Sacred volume a single command which

can be either obeyed or transgressed by a simple intellection or emotion.

In the realm of metaphysical theology this is a pivotal truth. It is decisive of the whole question of innate or constitutional sinfulness. Sin resides in choice alone, therefore it can not be predicted of "nature," "taste," "propensity," or of anything back of the will, and all the theories of inherited, constitutional, and transmitted sin are mere figments. The child may be born with strong animal propensities; but this is a calamity rather than a crime, and demands pity rather than punishment. On the other hand, regarding those amiable and natural traits which adorn the youth and age of so many impenitent men as virtuous, is equally illogical. Like rainbows and cloud-pictures they are beautiful, but only right choices are meritorious. The prevalent idea also that some occult holiness may be buried in the heart of one whose life is sinful, or some occult sin in the heart of one whose life is holy, is equally absurd and untruthful.

Our inquiries, then, after virtue must be limited to the will. Here we find two classes of exercises, (1) choices, (2) executive volitions. No one will claim that the element for which we are in search resides in the latter. These, therefore, we rule out, and narrow our inquiries to choices. And here we find it necessary to make another subdivision. There are two distinct classes of choices. (1.) Ultimate, or choices of ends, or of objects for their own sake. (2.) Subordinate, or choices of means to secure ends. The object of one is the good, of the other is the useful; one is the choice of absolute, the other of relative good. One, for convenience, we may call intentions, the other, choices.

We see, e.g., a man laboring in his field, or selling goods over his counter. On inquiry we ascertain that the choice which actuates him is that of money. But as money is not a good in itself, and therefore can not be chosen for its own sake, we recognize his choice as subordinate, and look for an ulterior end to which money sustains the relation of means. This, on further inquiry, we ascertain to be the welfare of the kingdom of God, or "the good of being in general." This choice we recognize at once as ultimate, for we can hardly conceive the "good of being" to be chosen for other than its own sake. In one or both of these classes we must find the moral element, for we look for it in vain elsewhere.

Does it reside in subordinate choices?

Such choices are free, and we ordinarily speak of them as good or ill-

deserving. Still a little reflection will satisfy us that the moral quality we ascribe to them resides primarily in the ultimate choices, of which they are but the manifestation and expression.

(1.) It is not possible to characterize any conduct as subjectively right or wrong which fails to reflect, or somehow reveal the intention behind it. Ask the child whether one is good or ill-deserving for preaching the word, "bestowing all his goods to feed the poor," or even taking human life. "It depends upon the motive," is his answer. He knows it is the intention which determines the moral quality of actions--that purposeless conduct is as void the moral, or even the rational element, as the contortions of epilepsy.

(2.) I repeat the same thought substantially in saying that it is not possible for a man to condemn himself or for any one to condemn him, for conduct, however unfortunate in its results, knowing his intention was right; or to approve himself, or for any one to approve him, for conduct, however fortunate, knowing his intention was wrong. No man was ever justly rewarded or punished for anything but his intention, for in nothing else is he blame or praiseworthy. This principle is, I think, recognized by all just tribunals. It accords with the unerring verdict of conscience and with the Word of God. "Reward them according to their endeavors," is the decision of the highest court.

(3.) Carrying into execution one's intentions, or failing to do so, neither adds nor detracts from his merit or demerit. The assassin is none the less guilty because he is unable to strike the fatal blow; nor is the dying saint less virtuous because his hands and tongue refuse longer to execute the behests of his benevolent heart; nor has God added anything to his original holiness by peopling space with worlds. "There is," says Kant, "nothing in the world, and we can not conceive of anything out of the world, which can be held to be good without qualification except a good will. . . . This good will is good not on account of its effects or its fitness to accomplish any given end, but simply in itself as a right choice or purpose. It is therefore to be prized incomparably higher for its own sake than anything which comes to pass to gratify any desire, or even all desires together. Even if the good will is unable to carry its purpose into execution still the good will would remain, and it would have its worth in itself, like a jewel which glitters with its own luster. Success or failure neither adds to nor takes from this worth. These are like the settings of

the gem, convenient for handling, and setting it forth to notice, but unheeded by the lapidary in estimating its real worth."<sup>6</sup>

I am safe in saying there is but one right thing in itself, and but one wrong thing in itself; that is ultimate choice--the purpose lying back of executive choices and volitions, more permanent than the eternal hills, the incarnation of character, the fountain of actions, the supreme, responsible, controlling principle of the soul. Here, and here only, we find the object of our search.

The primary error of the hyper-Calvinistic school lies in not only overlooking this fact, but in ignoring any such thing as intention. It is not in all their theology. "Taste," "Nature," "disposition" have taken its place. These, and not the supreme choice, dominate the human soul; they are the primary seat of good and ill-deserving, constitute the heart, and are the fountain whence all other streams flow. Hence, by logical necessity, the doctrines of Passive Regeneration, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Necessitated Will, and Propagated Sin. The enthronement of ultimate choice, its restoration to its proper place, and a little logic would relieve this system of all such absurdities, and evolve a theology in harmony with the Word of God and the nature of man. To show that I do not overstate the importance of such a substitution, allow me to quote from Professor Charles Hodge:<sup>7</sup> "We proceed," he says, "therefore, to state where the difference [between the Old and New Calvinist] really lies. All the old Calvinists hold that the result of the Holy Spirit's operation on the soul is a holy principle or disposition; Dr. Cox, if I understand him, holds that the result is a holy act. This is the whole ground of debate, and to lookers-on it may appear rather too narrow to be worth disputing about. Dr. Cox, however, seems to think this is a subject of vital importance, affecting deeply our views of the whole system of divine truth, and our manner of preaching; involving the high questions of the grounds of man's accountability, the nature of sin and holiness, and of human liberty. And here we are sorry to say we agree with him. We are afraid this is a turning point. We do not see how it is possible to hold together the tattered shreds of Calvinism if this ground be assumed. Is Calvinism then a mere metaphysical system? We think not, but there are some metaphysical principles utterly inconsistent with it; that indifference is necessary to freedom, is one, and that morality consists in acts alone we fear is another."

Defining virtue then as right ultimate choice it remains to inquire what is right ultimate choice, on what object does it terminate? The answer to this question is given in the reason, and consequently there can be no difference of opinion respecting it. What is a rational being bound to choose? Good, evidently, the valuable. He can not conceive of obligation to choose anything else. Good will, then, or benevolence, is the equivalent, the synonym, the scientific definition of virtue. It is the essence of all right character, "the fulfilling of the law," and of all the claims which can rest upon a moral being. All virtuous choices and conduct are but expressions of benevolence, and borrow their moral quality from it, as the moon borrows its light from the sun. Nothing else is strictly right; nothing else secures the approbation of conscience and of God.

Just what this good is which the reason reveals as the proper object of choice--whether it be happiness alone, or whether other elements enter into it, it is not important to inquire. I will call it well being, or the "welfare of being in general." The choice of this for its own sake I conceive to be the essence and totality of virtue.

Is there any other virtue? Is more than one right intention possible? I answer no; virtue wherever it exists is essentially the same thing. It is the choice of good for its own sake. But good can not be chosen for its own sake without choosing the highest good--all good, good as such. Choosing more than all is impossible; choosing less is sinful; choosing anything else would not be a moral, or even a rational exercise. Benevolence then, and nothing else, is virtue.

We come to the question, what is sin, or a wrong ultimate choice--the most difficult question of ethics. (1.) It can not be a mere negation, or a refusal to choose the end intelligence dictates, for the sufficient reason such a choice is not ultimate. (2.) Nor can it be the choice of evil for its own sake. Whether such a choice is possible or not, it is so far as we know never made. (3.) Nor is it the ultimate choice of one's personal good, for this would be right, were there no other interest to choose. It can not then be per se sin. It is doubtful, also, whether one could aim at his own highest welfare without becoming benevolent, as the only rational means of securing this end. Sin must be the preference of some lesser to the greater good--a choice which carries with it a disregard of the good of being--a self-pleasing at the virtual expense and sacrifice of

the general welfare--a betrayal of infinite interests at the dictates of impulse and passion. "Sin," says Professor Harris, "which is the essential evil, consists of self-isolation. . . . Sin and evil arise when a person by his own free choice isolates himself from the system, by choosing himself as his supreme object of service, and so puts himself into antagonism to both God and man, and does what he can to mar the order and beauty of the system and resist and annul its supreme law."<sup>8</sup>

Are there degrees of virtue and sinfulness? Of the latter there certainly are. The Saviour asserts the fact, and gives the ground on which it rests, in speaking of the relative ill-desert of those who know, and of those who do not know their master's will, and yet do things worthy of stripes. He makes the guilt of sin increase with the light under which it is committed, or with the apprehended value of the good which it sacrifices. The murder of Garfield was a greater sacrifice of apprehended interests than the cheating of a landlord, and therefore a greater crime.

There are also degrees of virtue. God is infinitely more virtuous than any and all created intelligences together. The reason doubtless is, the good He apprehends and chooses is infinitely broader than that apprehended and chosen by any other being. Virtue and sinfulness then vary by the same law--one, by the apprehended value of the good regarded, and the other by the apprehended value of the good disregarded. The virtue of the Christian, then, may vary from time to time, as his sense of the value of the general interest, which he lives to subserve, is stimulated or obscured.

If the views presented in this paper are correct, it is not possible for virtue and sin to coexist in the same mind. They may alternate; the virtuous man may become sinful, and the sinful man virtuous, but they can not be both at the same time. Virtue is the choice of the welfare of being. Sin involves the refusal to make this choice. To say the two may blend, or that a choice may be both sinful and holy, or in part sinful and in part holy, involves the contradiction of asserting that one may both make a virtuous choice and at the same time refuse to make it. Sin and holiness mutually exclude each other. Moral character is either sinful or holy, wholly right or wholly wrong. A mixed moral action is in the nature of things an impossibility.

May not virtuous choices vary in intensity, and in this respect be more or

less perfect? We speak, I am aware, of strong and feeble purposes, but I incline to the view that these qualities pertain to the considerations and feelings which solicit and sustain a purpose rather than to the purpose itself. A purpose or choice, it seems to me, is in its own nature complete and perfect. What can be the meaning of the injunction, "choose strongly," "purpose intensely?" Color and weight may, I think, be as properly predicated of choices as intensity.

May not the Christian, under the influence of sudden impulse, act inconsistently with his ruling choice and commit sin while retaining his benevolent intention? This question involves the absurdity of asking whether one may not sin in doing what he had no intention of doing; or whether one may not do wrong while intending to do right. In the estimation of men he possibly may, but not in the sight of God, "who seeth not as man seeth," nor in the view of conscience, or of any intelligent, impartial judge. To say he may, is a denial of the unquestioned fact that intentions determine the moral quality of actions.

We may, I think, assert as a great philosophical as well as biblical truth, that "no man can serve two masters;" that "a good tree can not bring forth corrupt fruit, nor a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." "Make the tree good and its fruit good, or the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt," is a precept of science as well as of revelation.

Our subject affords us the scientific definition of regeneration. The word designates a change of moral character--a change from a condition of blame-worthiness to that of praise-worthiness, or from an object of the Divine disapproval to that of the Divine approval. But moral character lies primarily in the ultimate choice; then regeneration is primarily a change of the ultimate choice. It is the acceptance of the welfare of being in place of self-pleasing as the end of pursuit. The Holy Spirit is active, doubtless, in all such changes, and we may reverently ascribe them to him, but the idea that the influences by which he secures them, are physical or compulsory, or other than persuasive, is at war with all the laws of the human mind, and all the teachings of the Sacred Word.

Regeneration sooner or later carries with it, as results, new thoughts, and feelings, and choices, and conduct, and we may, if we choose, include all these in its definition. I only contend that it is primarily a change of the supreme choice, and in the nature of things must be made by the subject

himself.

It is objected that the view presented in this paper makes moral character exceedingly unstable--that like the pendulum one may swing from one moral extreme to the other, back and forth, as the hours pass. Viewing moral character, not as the prevailing predominant condition of the agent, but as the attitude of his will at the moment toward the right end of life, such fluctuations are doubtless possible and frequent. The will of the newly-made convert, in the imperfection of his knowledge and feelings, may oscillate for a season, like the disturbed needle, but its whole tendency is to permanence, and when fixed there is nothing in the universe more unchanging.

Even subordinate choices are often exceedingly persistent. The youth chooses wealth as the means of self-gratification, and when age has shed its snows on his temples his trembling hands are still reaching out for gold. If this is true of a subordinate, what shall we say of an ultimate choice! These heavens will probably pass away sooner. There is almost nothing else about a human soul so immovable. The choice of self-pleasing is made in the early years of childhood, and unless yielded through an influence greater than human the subject will bear it to another world, and retain it while life and being last. The change of such a choice may well be denominated "the new birth," for there can be none other so deep, and radical, and far-reaching. Professor Phelps has well said, "such is the imperial will of man, by which it is his privilege and peril to be what he will, that a purpose toward immutability grows out of its nature, and accumulates with time. Once bent one way, the sprig coils that way forever. Once set in the chosen mould, the compound indurates into granite. Such is character in the ultimate notion of it. A creation by man's own act--a free creation, a creation which can be reversed--yet once in being it tends to deathless being like that of God."<sup>9</sup> The chief danger is that we shall accept as conversion to God some change less radical than that of this "imperial will."

It is farther objected that putting religion primarily into the voluntary department of our nature makes it cold, intellectual, and simply ethical. But here is precisely where the inspired Apostle placed it. "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep himself unspotted from the world." In other words, benevolence, or the principle which finds expression in

benevolent and upright conduct, is, before our God and Father, pure and undefiled religion. Is such a religion as this cold, intellectual, heartless? Precisely the opposite is true. From a soul dominated by the selfish principle all the fresher springs of feeling are gradually drying up; all the tenderer, sweeter emotions, like buried embers, are dying out and giving place to the cold, gloomy and malign. This silent process is going on in every unrenewed heart. Selfishness is self-isolation, and can not but deaden the affections, wither the soul, and dis sever every link which binds it to kindred being. Benevolence is the panacea. With the power of an enchantress it makes the soul's emotions gush forth like the waters from the smitten rock.

With the great Edwards and Finney, I make virtue the synonym of benevolence.

What else can it be? What else satisfies the reason, hushes the murmurs of conscience into song, fills the soul with the peace of God? What else is so fascinating? What other beauty like "the beauty of holiness?" Whose are the graves we keep fresh with our tears, the memories we weave into our songs, the names we will not let die? The men of consecrated lives, the servants of their generation. Even infidelity and atheism honor and revere such names.

With this definition of virtue how dread and obligatory the divine law! Were its great imperative "thou shalt feel supreme affection toward God, and equal toward men," the question would instantly arise, "What for?" The combined feeling of the world can not feed a starving beggar, or comfort a homeless child, or control a human choice. Such a law would fail to secure the sanction of reason, for it would be neither feasible nor obligatory. The conviction that this is what the law of love requires, and that the sanctions of heaven and hell are behind it, can not but be terrible in its practical workings. On the other hand, the requirement of good will among the offspring of God, of the devotion of each to the highest welfare of all, commends itself to every man's conscience, and compels every man's intellect, whether his heart shall accord or not, to unite in the great acclaim, "Just and righteous are thy ways, thou King of Saints."

## **IV. REGENERATION**

THERE are few important truths more generally accepted than the divine declaration, "Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God." The sceptic, the atheist, men of every shade of opinion, admit that Adam's race, individually and collectively, need radical transformation to meet even their lowest ideal of perfect society. This truth permeates the Sacred volume. "It is," says Professor Phelps, "one of the constructive ideas of inspiration. It is pervasive, like the life-blood in the body. It is like caloric in the globe. If a tortuous exegesis shall evade it in one text, it is inevitable in the next. Wrench it from any text, where the theologians have found it, and its echo reverberates from one end of the Bible to the other.<sup>10</sup> It is also a basal doctrine in theological science. Its true nature is decisive of the controversy between the two great schools of theology, and determines the logical mode of presenting the claims of God and the truths of the Gospel.

I propose, in this paper, to inquire, What is regeneration, or what change in the human soul is designated by the word?

There are but two theories worthy our attention.<sup>11</sup> One--the Calvinistic,--is presented by E. H. McIntosh thus: "Let us see clearly what regeneration is. It is a new birth; the implanting of a new life, the implantation of a new nature; the formation of a new man. The old nature remains in all its distinctness, and the new nature remains in all its distinctness. Regeneration is to the soul what the birth of Isaac was to the household of Abraham. Ishmael remained the same Ishmael, but Isaac was introduced."<sup>12</sup>

As to the Author of this new nature, the writer is equally explicit: "Regeneration is God's own work from first to last. God is the operator, man is the privileged subject. Man's co-operation is not sought in a work which must ever bear the impress of one Almighty hand. God was alone in creation, alone in redemption, and he must be alone in the mysterious glorious work of regeneration."

This definition, which probably strikes no one as satisfactory, has the sanction of many great names. It is substantially the one given by President Dwight; though clothed in his elegant diction we hardly recognize it. "A change of heart," he says, "is a relish for spiritual objects communicated to it by the power of the Holy Ghost." Of the "metaphysical nature" of this relish, he acknowledges himself ignorant, but illustrates his

views thus:

"When God created Adam, there was a period after he began to be, antecedent to that in which he exercised his first volition. Every man will acknowledge that in this state, he was propense to the exercise of virtuous volitions rather than sinful ones. This state of mind has commonly been styled disposition, temper, inclination, heart, etc. In the Scriptures it usually bears the last of these names. I shall take the liberty to call it disposition. This disposition in Adam was the cause whence his virtuous volitions proceeded--the reason why they were virtuous and not sinful. . . . In regeneration the same thing is done by the Spirit of God for the soul which was done for Adam, by the same Divine Agent, at his creation. The soul of Adam was created with a relish for spiritual objects. The soul of every man who becomes a Christian is renewed by the communication of the same relish. In Adam this disposition preceded virtuous volitions. In every child of Adam who becomes a subject of virtue, it produces the same effects. . . . The communication of this relish as truly followed by virtuous willing and doing as the creative act would be which should immediately give existence to our volitions and conduct."<sup>13</sup>

His views of the continuance of the old nature after the implantation of the new correspond with those of McIntosh. "After regeneration," he says, "the native character of the man still remains; his relish for sinful pursuits and enjoyments still continues; and his relish for spiritual pursuits is never perfected on this side the grave; . . . the regenerate man is really virtuous and really sinful--his true, entire character being a mixture of both good and evil."<sup>14</sup>

President Dwight has given us, in this quotation, a clear and able statement of the Calvinistic theory of regeneration--one in which, I think, all representative Calvinistic writers substantially concur. "In regeneration," says Dr. Bellamy, "there is a new, divine, holy taste begotten in the heart, by the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit."<sup>15</sup> "Regeneration," says Dr. Charles Hodge, "is the influence of the Spirit of God, producing such a relish for the Divine Character that the soul spontaneously and immediately embraces God as its portion." "That regeneration consists in the production of a holy habit, a principle in the soul, disposing it to, and fitting it to, holy acts," he declares to be "the Calvinistic doctrine of regeneration."<sup>16</sup> Professor Hyde<sup>17</sup> says:

"Regeneration is the act of God's Spirit by which He produces the beginning of a holy life in a depraved soul; . . . implanting a disposition to holiness in those whom he calls, and justifies as his children. He produces it by an inward, creative operation. The change is not self-wrought, or man-wrought." This is substantially the view of Calvin, Edwards, the Westminster divines, etc.

The theory is plain: Adam was created with a holy disposition, or nature, from which holy exercises spontaneously and necessarily flowed. In the fall, this holy nature was displaced, and a wicked one, from which only wicked exercises could proceed, was substituted, and has been transmitted to all his posterity "by ordinary generation." Regeneration is the partial re-instatement of this holy relish, by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit; but, on account of the co-occupancy of the soul by a wicked nature, the effluent products are a mixture of holiness and sin.

The theory is plain. Still, it seems to me, a principle of such transcendent importance as this relish, whether sinful or holy, deserves a distincter and severer definition. It is not, I understand, the seat of moral character simply--the fountain and source of all holy and wicked conduct--but moral character itself, sin and holiness in their essence.

"From this corruption of our nature," asserts the Westminster Confession, "proceed all actual transgressions." It also asserts that "this corruption of our nature, with all the motions thereof, is truly and properly sin."

I regret that the advocates of this view have not more clearly defined a principle, occupying so prominent a place in their system. What is its metaphysical nature? Is it an entity--a quality--or a mere exercise or state? To what department of the mind does it belong? Not to the intellect certainly. It can not be a cognition or thought. Nor is it an exercise of the will. "Adam was created," affirms Dr. Hodge, "with a holy disposition which existed prior to his first holy act;" and this, he asserts, "is fixed belief among Calvinists." We must therefore relegate it to the sensibility; and here is just where the uniform language of Calvinistic writers compels us to locate it. They represent it as "taste," "relish," "holy desire," "pleasure in, and appetency for, spiritual things," evidently classifying it with the propensities, desires, feelings, or appetites of our nature.

We readily concede, as Dr. Hodge has so ably shown, there is nothing abhorrent to reason in the theory that Adam was created with such

relishes. Men are now born with propensities, tastes, and natural appetites. Nor is there anything unreasonable in the theory that these relishes were lost in the fall, and that a disrelish for holy pursuits took their place. And certainly there is nothing incongruous with things, in the idea that this relish is restored in regeneration. It doubtless is, sooner or later, and grows with Christian growth.

1. We can easily conceive of such relishes and disrelishes, but the problem is to get the moral element into them. The difficulty is like that the materialist finds in getting the not more mysterious principle of life into inert protoplasm. How can a being be good or ill-deserving, praise or blameworthy, where he has no voluntary agency? President Edwards keenly felt this difficulty. "The grand objection," he says, "against this doctrine is this, that it is utterly inconsistent with the nature of virtue, that it should be concreated with any person; because, if so, it must be an act of absolute power, without our knowledge or concurrence, and that virtue, in its very nature, implieth a choice, or consent, of a moral agent, without which, it can not be virtue or holiness; that a necessary holiness is no holiness."<sup>18</sup> We do not wonder he was stumbled with this difficulty, for it is simply fatal to his theory. Whatever else may be true, it can not be that a moral being merits reward or deserves punishment for that with which he was created. From an idea so monstrously absurd, every human instinct revolts. Nothing could consign a man to ignominy more abysmal than that of starving or punishing a child for an enfeebled constitution inherited from an enfeebled mother--for nothing could be more unjust and cruel; and none would more loudly execrate the deed than the men who hold that that very child, for the corrupt nature inherited from Adam, "is bound over to the wrath of God and the curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal."

It will interest us to inquire how a difficulty so formidable is surmounted by the advocates of this theory. President Edwards does not, I think, attempt to remove it, but adopts the system in spite of it. Deeming it the less absurd of two absurdities, he accepts it, as he would nauseous medicine, rather than do worse. He rejects the theory of the self-determining power of the will, as involving the absurdity of an event without a cause, or of an event self-caused. The will, in his view, is moved from without. Motives produce and determine the character of choices, as the blow produces the vibrations of the bell. A holy choice, therefore, can proceed only from

a holy motive, and a sinful choice only from a sinful motive. Adam must have been holy before he could perform a holy act; and sinful, before it was possible for him to sin. "It is the general notion," he says, "not that principles derive their goodness from actions, but actions from principles whence they proceed, so that the act of choosing that which is good is no further virtuous than that it proceeds from a good principle, or virtuous state of mind. If the choice be first, before the good disposition of mind, what signifies that choice? There can be, according to our natural notions, no virtue in a choice which proceeds from no virtuous principle."<sup>19</sup>

But neither Calvin nor Dr. Hodge seems to see any difficulty here. "I deny," says the former, "that sin is the less criminal because it is necessary."<sup>20</sup> "The desire for holiness," says the latter, "is holy, no matter how it rises in the mind. The common judgment of mankind is, that moral character belongs to the desire of moral objects. Its morality lies in its nature, independently of its origin. We think that a vast majority of men agree with President Edwards, in thinking such a disposition being natural, or from a kind of instinct implanted in the mind at its creation, is no objection to its being of a virtuous character. Does the maternal instinct cease to be amiable because it is natural? Does the disposition to kindness and gentleness lose its character by being innate? Are not the intuitive love of justice, abhorrence of cruelty, admiration for that which is noble, which God has implanted in our nature, objects of approbation? If our feelings and the general sense of mankind answer these questions in the affirmative, they as certainly will decide that the innate disposition to love God, existing in the mind of Adam at the moment of his creation, does not lose its moral character by being innate. This common feeling and judgment of mankind, therefore, carry moral distinctions back of acts of choice, and must do so, unless we deny that virtue ever can commence; for there can be no virtue in a choice which proceeds from no virtuous principle."<sup>21</sup>

(1.) This reasoning, which probably satisfies no one, assumes, as is readily seen, the non-self-determining power of the will--a dogma upon which hinges not only the Calvinistic theory of regeneration, but, as President Edwards admits, the whole Calvinistic system. His language is: "I stand ready to confess to the fore-mentioned divines, if they can maintain their peculiar notions of freedom, consisting in the self-

determining power of the will as necessary to moral agency; and can thoroughly establish it, in opposition to the arguments lying against it,-- then they have an impregnable fortress to which they may resort, and remain invulnerable in all their controversies with the reformed divines, concerning original sin, the sovereignty of grace, election, redemption, efficacious influence of the Holy Spirit, the nature of saving faith, and other principles of like kind."22

We shall certainly be slow in accepting a definition of regeneration which, according to its own advocates, involves the necessitarian theory of the will, makes holiness a thing to be created rather than commanded, and locates blame and praiseworthiness where there is, and can be, no voluntary agency.

(2.) This definition is not only based upon an erroneous view of the nature of sin and holiness, but it degrades and utterly misinterprets the nature of man. It ignores his conscience and reason--his higher, awful spiritual being--and their imperious claims. It takes no account of the dread ideas of right, obligation, accountability, and the authority of the divine law. It conceives of man, not as a moral being, under fealty to his higher nature, but as a mere animal, to be controlled by instinct, appetency, and feeling. It makes the implantation of a taste the new birth, and subjection to its control man's highest estate. Before this implantation, the subject is in bondage to a relish for carnal things; after it, he is in bondage to a relish for spiritual things. The change consists in a transfer of the soul's allegiance from one appetite to another; or in the subordination of the will to a new and stronger form of self-gratification. It makes holiness not the enthronement of conscience and the law of God, but of the sensibility, or what the Apostle terms, "the flesh," and commits the soul to the leadership of a blind impulse. Is not this the direct antithesis of the regeneration which introduces the subject into the kingdom of God?

3. This theory equally degrades the work of the Holy Spirit. It makes regeneration, not the victory of truth, and of the cross of Christ, but of physical omnipotence. According to it, the Divine Spirit converts the enemies of God into friends by a mechanical process. He secures the services and Te Deums of intelligent beings by machinery. It is force, not moral influences, which he employs in governing moral beings. It also makes the work of the Holy Spirit pitifully imperfect. According to it, a

stinted implantation, waging a feeble and doubtful warfare upon the depravity of the heart, never securing an act or feeling untarnished by sin, and in no case gaining the complete mastery in this life, is the new birth, and makes the subject of it a "new creature." It is difficult not to feel that such a communication is unworthy both the Author and the name of regeneration.

4. This theory is misleading in that it gives an erroneous idea of the nature and turpitude of sin. It makes it, not a wilful and criminal transgression of the divine law, but an inherited disease, for which the sinner is neither responsible nor guilty. According to it, he is a born and constitutional enemy of God, and, without fault of his own, is in possession of a wicked nature, "every motion of which is truly and properly sin." In other words, he is innocently and helplessly a sinner, and so, in spite of all human endeavor, he must remain, until regenerated by the sovereign power of God; and even after that, he is doomed to a burden of moral corruption, until death shall relieve him. With such views, how can he have just conceptions of the enormity of sin, or of the justice of its punishment? Must he not regard himself as more unfortunate than criminal--more sinned against than sinning?

5. This theory is misleading in another respect. It encourages men to expect God to do for them the very thing he is working in them to will and do--the thing, which, in the nature of the case, no being save themselves can do. Multitudes, under this delusion, are praying and waiting, while the months and years are passing, for some undefined and miraculous intervention, and are gradually giving up in indifference or despair, and dying without hope.

Scarcely less deplorable are the habits of self-introspection, and the inward discouraging struggles, consequent upon putting the moral element into the sensibilities. This fruitless warfare against involuntary states and exercises, in themselves as destitute of moral character as physical diseases, is diverting and absorbing the activities of multitudes who otherwise would be co-workers with God, and is thus converting Christians into invalids, and churches into hospitals.

6. Again, if the implantation of a relish, or anything God can do, is per se regeneration, we have the right to ask--the question is unavoidable--Why are not all regenerated? To say, "It hath pleased God, for the glory of His

sovereign power, to pass by some and ordain them to dishonor and wrath," fails to silence, for the assertion is in terrible dissonance with the divine character, and with all divine teaching. If the Sacred Scriptures mean anything, it is that God "hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth"-- that He is infinitely anxious "all should be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth." To charge Him with the loss of a soul, or with doing less to save it than infinite love and wisdom permit, is cruel in its injustice. We have the right to ask: Why are not all regenerated? and the theory which utterly fails to afford an answer is in itself an utter failure.

7. This theory can not but impair the power of the pulpit. The great commission is, we admit, a sufficient justification of preaching the Gospel to every creature; but the thoughtful preacher must often ask what relation there is between the preached Word and the regeneration of men. Apparently there is none. To human view, error is just as efficacious as truth, the Koran as the Bible; and neither has any more tendency to secure the change than to secure the thunderstorm, or any other display of divine power. "Regeneration," says Dr. Hodge, "is a change in the production of which man in no way co-operates, any more than did the blind man in the recovery of his sight."<sup>23</sup> "Man by the fall," the Westminster Confession assures us, "hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation." But faithful preaching, it will be said, stimulates the sinner to read the Word, attend upon the means of grace, pray, and put himself in the way of regeneration; but the ambassador of Christ is met by the dreadful fact that "a corrupt tree can not bring forth good fruit"--that the plowing of the wicked is sin--that anything, everything, the sinner can do, prior to regeneration, coming as it does from an unrenewed heart, is necessarily sin. What, then, can he say? Evidently he must exhort the inquirer to do what he knows to be a sin against God, or he must be silent.

A still more formidable difficulty grows out of the apparent insincerity of offering pardon to those for whom there is no certainty it has been provided, or to those whom there is no certainty the Holy Spirit will ever regenerate. The preacher may take refuge under the great command. Still he must know he is encouraging hopes which, in many cases, can never be realized, and is dealing not quite fairly with impenitent men. The shrewd Calvin saw the difficulty, and endeavors to escape it by denying that the Gospel implies such offers. He even denounces, as "fanatics,

those who pretend that grace is offered promiscuously and freely to all." An untrammelled pulpit needs a different definition of regeneration.

8. This theory assumes that this holy relish is communicated to the sinner, while in sin, and in defiant rebellion against God, and is the cause, rather than the result, of obedient choices. This seems intensely improbable. To our poor thought, the natural and politic order would be submission first, the gift and the blessing afterward. This is certainly the order presented in the parable of the Prodigal Son. The father's embrace and welcome, the best robe and the fatted calf, did not precede but followed repentance, and submission to the father's authority. Let us suppose the order reversed--that the drunkard in his sinful career becomes the subject of this divine communication--what guarantee have we that he will not resist his better impulse, and continue his course of self-indulgence--nay, that he will not accept the experience as evidence of the divine approval, and of his own good estate, and become more hopelessly confirmed in his life of sin? I can see, if this theory be true, no incompatibility between a holy heart and a life of awful wickedness, nor any necessary connection, if man is free, between sin and a transgression of the divine law.

That regeneration is, in an important sense, the work of the Holy Spirit, is readily conceded. The point at issue relates not to the fact, but to the mode, of divine working. The Calvinistic idea, as we have seen, encounters insuperable difficulties. It finds support neither in human consciousness, nor in the word of God. The idea that right choices are necessarily conditioned upon holy relishes is repugnant to anyone's sense of freedom and manliness, and there is not in the Sacred Records so much as an intimation that any such mechanical operation as the theory contemplates is needed, or in any case experienced. On the contrary, they everywhere assume that the sinner is already in possession of all the attributes requisite to immediate and perfect obedience, and is without excuse.

More than this, they distinctly announce the mode of divine operation. "The sword of the Spirit is the word of God;" "Of His own will begot he us by the word of truth. Being born not of corruptible things, but of incorruptible, through the word of God;" and similar passages, settle the philosophy of regeneration, and make the fact incontestable, that it is by a moral, and not by a physical, influence the Spirit of God regenerates

man.

Nor has the Calvinistic theory the slightest warrant in human experience. What soul ever found peace by waiting for a "disposition to holiness?" What Christian minister ever encouraged an inquirer to expect, or hope for, any such experience prior to submission to God? We hesitate not to say, that the author of the "New Catechism," all through his ministerial life, preached against his own theory--that he a thousand times assured the prodigal that his salvation depended upon his arising, and going, as he is, to his Father; and a thousand times warned him of the folly and peril of expecting "an inward creative operation" to precede such a surrender. No Calvinistic minister takes his creed into his inquiry-room.<sup>24</sup> Atheism would not more directly antagonize his work.

Nor can any two things be more incompatible than this view of regeneration, and the strivings of the Holy Spirit with unregenerated men. Unless these mysterious influences have been misinterpreted by the whole Christian church, they are of the nature of yearning entreaty, "deep and strong beseechings," "voices from another clime," more mournful than a requiem, urging them to leave the ways of sin, and yield to God's control. What mean these solemn influences, following the sinner from childhood to age, disturbing his waking and sleeping hours? On whom rests the responsibility of his impenitence? In default of whose agency is he unsaved? Is divine or human action the one thing needful to restore him to the favor of God?

The communication of a "holy relish" is evidently not the vital, primary thing constituting regeneration. It is absurd to suppose it, or anything communicated or done by another, can render the recipient meritorious. Such a communication, like a thousand other things, may serve as a motive to holy choices, yet it is questionable whether it would not, just as frequently, conduce to carnal security, or self-righteousness, and prove a bane rather than a blessing. No relish, appetency, desire, or impulse, communicated to the drunkard, constitutes reform even, much less that change which makes a man a new creature. Regeneration is not a thing to be created or communicated. It belongs to another zone, and occupies an infinitely higher plane.

What, then, is regeneration? It is the change which makes a bad man a good man, an ill-deserving man meritorious, and worthy the approbation

and complacency of God and other moral things. "To regenerate a man," says President Finney, "is to make him holy."

In what this change consists, a simple illustration will make plain: A drunkard goes to a temperance meeting, and returns a reformed man. He has experienced a marked, possibly a radical, change. In precisely what does it consist? Was it primarily of the intellect? Was it an accession of knowledge, an enlargement of thought, a change of opinion? No, there might have been a wondrous change in all these respects, without the semblance of reformation, or there might have been a wondrous reformation without the semblance of intellectual change. Was it primarily of his emotive nature? No, there might have been a total revolution of feeling, and no reformation of life, or there might have been a radical reformation of life, with no new or different feeling. Something has been reached in that drunkard's soul, deeper than thought or emotion. Was it a change in outward conduct? Not necessarily. He might have reeled to the meeting drunk, and reeled home again in the same condition, but a radically reformed man; or he might have returned sober, and remained sober the rest of life, without the slightest transformation of character. Thousands in our prisons, deprived of intoxicating drink, are as truly drunkards at heart as when habitually under its influence. In what, then, did his reformation consist? In the purpose, no one can doubt, there formed, to touch, taste, handle, the poison no more forever. That decision, if radical, was the pivotal point, that was the natal supreme moment, the new birth, the redemption, the emancipation, of a soul, and so he ever after regards it. It towers up from that moment, the highest mountain summit of his memory, around which his thought will linger forever. Compared with this, all other changes are fitful and uneventful. Then the will is the residence of the moral element, and a change of moral character is a change of the will.

Indeed, if there be one immovable landmark in the moral world--one truth which no one, outside lunatic asylums, practically questions, it is that moral character resides exclusively in the ultimate intention of the will.<sup>25</sup> On this point there is no practical difference of view. We instinctively assume that conduct is right or wrong, according to the intention it involves and reflects, and it is not possible to do otherwise.

Then, if moral character resides exclusively in the ultimate choice, and regeneration is a change of moral character, it is but a truism to say, it is

a change in that choice. Regeneration is the abandonment of self-pleasing, and the acceptance of the interests of God's kingdom, as the end of pursuit. It is coming into harmony with reason and the divine law, by choosing what reason dictates, and devoting life to the end for which God lives, and toward which the universe trends.

And who regenerates a man--in other words, who changes his purpose--himself or another? Is it conceivable that the choice of another makes a man meritorious? Is it possible that conscience, God or any moral being can appraise, and deem good-deserving, one man for what another does? Honesty is manifestly the purpose of the subject to be honest, and nothing else. Holiness is one's own purpose to obey God, and can not be that of another. Then who regenerates? We reverently ascribe the work to the Holy Spirit, because his mysterious influences secure its accomplishment; but the change is the sinner's own act, and, in the nature of things, can not be that of another.

How, it is asked, can a holy choice proceed from an unholy heart? or a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit? All difficulty on this point vanishes the moment we consider that the heart is the free-will--that a holy heart is the will in proper adjustment to the rational end of life; and an unholy heart is a will out of such adjustment. Only wrong choices, it is admitted, can proceed from a wicked heart; but the sinner is competent, at any moment, to make to himself a new heart, or come into harmony with the right end of life. By doing this he purifies the fountain head, and makes all the streams pure.

It is asked whether a better definition would not include in regeneration, not only the change of the sinner's purpose, but the divine influence which secures its adoption, pardon, and the consequent change in the subject's views, feelings, and outward life. Such a definition is certainly admissible, and largely accepted. The objections to it are: (1.) It tends to divert attention from the primal fact, that a change of the governing purpose is, per se, the change of moral character, and is, on the part of the sinner, the essential and supremely important thing. (2.) It makes regeneration a gradual work, incomplete in this life and in the life to come.

This view of regeneration accords, it seems to me, with the Divine Word. It does no violence to man's nature, and relieves the doctrine of

difficulties with which many minds have long wrestled. It makes the great change, not organic, supernatural, ghostly, or mysterious, but simple, rational, comprehensible; brings it within the ability of every man; and makes it infinitely obligatory. It is not a change of the nature of the soul, nor of any of its faculties, but simply of its uses. Adam employed precisely the powers in disobeying he had previously employed in obeying God. In returning to allegiance he needed no new faculty. His regeneration was but the tragedy of Eden reversed. As the ship which has been prostituted to piracy on the high seas returns, without any change of structure, to its legitimate uses; so in regeneration the soul returns to the sphere and work for which it was made.

The change is a stupendous one, reaching the principle of man's nature, lying back of his thoughts, feelings, and conduct. It is more radical, revolutionary, and abiding than any other, and is probably never permanently reversed. It lifts the soul into another life, and gives it its own place in the great constellation of being, where it will keep time and tune forever. It is a change the sinner never effects, except under the guidance and pressure of an influence from above, mysterious as the wind blowing where it listeth. It is so great as to abundantly justify the strong expressions of the Sacred Word to illustrate and describe it.

At the same time it is so reasonable, so obligatory, in such accord with what we should expect from rational men, we are prepared to find it treated in the Bible as a very simple thing. We are not surprised to hear it used interchangeably with repentance, believing, reconciliation, and returning to God; or to find such passages as these: "Many more believe on him." "They that received his word were baptized." "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." These, and scores of other texts, seem to me incongruous with the idea that the change is supernatural, mysterious, and very inexplicable. It certainly involves no miracle, no infraction of natural law. It is but yielding to the voice of reason, the pressure of the Holy Spirit, and to the great trend of things. The time is coming when it will appear as simple and natural a thing for the child to bow in submission to divine as in submission to parental authority.

This view of regeneration makes sin unnecessary and inexcusable, and every moment of impenitency a crime. It justifies God in being angry with the wicked, and relieves the universal offer of pardon of all seeming

insincerity. It also throws some light on the dark problem of ruined souls. Divine influence over the human will is, in the nature of things, limited. Holiness is free, uncoerced choice; and any influence to secure it, beyond ability to resist, destroys freedom and defeats its own end. Therefore, sinners can, and do "resist the Holy Ghost." The mournful questions: "Why will ye die?" "How can I give thee up?" "What more could have been done?" "How oft would I have gathered thy children together!" come with amazing significance. They are the breathings of infinite compassion over thwarted efforts to save men. Around the grave of every lost one the Holy Spirit hovers, the chiefest mourner, having done all that infinite wisdom could do to avert the catastrophe. To have done less would be inconsistent with divine sincerity, and an infraction of divine law. "Thou hast destroyed thyself," written by unseen fingers, and whispered by unheard voices, over the resting-places of the incorrigible dead, vindicates the ways of God, and measurably solves the mystery of lost souls.

No one, whether able or not, to accept the views of this paper, will question the transcendent practical importance of this subject. What is man? Is he but a waif on the great sea, driven by winds he has no power to control or resist? Is he the object of a preordination changeless as God? By the fall, hath he "wholly lost all ability of will, to any spiritual good, accompanying salvation?" If so, what can we advise him, but to wait patiently and watch the issues of irresistible currents, and accept his foreordained and irreversible destiny, whether of eternal life or eternal death? But if not, he who teaches these dogmas is doing an incalculable wrong. President Finney, referring to the Calvinistic view of regeneration, says: "while the sinner believes it, and bears it in mind, his regeneration is not possible."

To what extent this fatalistic theology has shorn the Gospel of its power, and retarded its victories, we can not know now. It has long been a matter of astonishment to me that the enemies of our holy religion have not, to a larger extent, availed themselves of it, as a weapon against the faith once delivered to the saints. Could "Edwards on the Will," that marvelous monument of analytical reasoning, be popularized and brought within the easy comprehension of the ordinary reader, we should greatly dread its influence. It is the corner-stone of a profoundly logical, self-consistent, far-reaching system of fatalism--one which has been

accepted, defended, and elaborated by some of the profoundest thinkers of the world. Augustine, Calvin, Edwards, and scores of others, whose memories we cherish as holy things, have been its advocates. It rules freedom and free-agency out of the universe.

It makes obligation and guilt, duty and accountability, words without meaning. It subjects all thought and motion to the stern law of cause and effect, and reduces creation, physical and moral, to a vast and complicated machine, controlled by a single will.

This is the theology of Calvinistic creeds, of Calvinistic theological lecture-rooms, of mouldy theological volumes, and of occasional doctrinal sermons, but not, thank God, of the great Calvinistic heart, and a vast majority of nominally Calvinistic pulpits. The Calvinistic heart, fired by the love of Christ, is stronger than Calvinistic logic. In spite of theories and creeds, ordination vows and heresy-hunters, it draws the claims of God fresh from the divine oracles. The ability and duty of men everywhere to repent, and to do it now, the freedom and boundlessness of the great salvation, are pressed from these pulpits upon men, with a power and unction nowhere, in this world, excelled. Whatever we may think of their consistency, their work and the grandeur of their success call forth our admiration and devout thanksgivings.

## **V. DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY AND FREE-AGENCY**

Our subject, including its cognate themes,--divine foreknowledge, decrees, election, the existence of moral evil--involves some of the profoundest problems of human thought. We may wish to dismiss a subject so cloudy and incomprehensible for themes more practical and easily understood; but we find it a subject not easily dismissed. It confronts us on almost every page of the Sacred Oracles; it occupies a prominent place in all our confessions and creeds, and asserts itself as a great practical question, over which age is wrangling and childhood inquiring. "The doctrine of divine decrees," says Dr. Emmons, "is the light and strength and glory of the Gospel. With this doctrine, the whole system of truth must stand or fall."<sup>26</sup>

I propose, in this paper, to suggest a few thoughts which may possibly relieve other minds, as they have my own, of some of the perplexities of

this most perplexing subject. Some facts relating to it are, on all sides, conceded:

(1.) The eternity of God, by which we mean His existence, is infinite--never having had a beginning, and never to have an end.

(2.) The sovereignty of God, by which we mean, "He doeth according to His will in the army above and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand, or say what doest thou?"

(3.) His omniscience, by which we mean all events, actual and possible, are known to Him.

(4.) He sustains a relation to time entirely different from our own. Our existence is progressive, constantly receding from the point at which it began. We grow older as the years pass. Nothing like this can be true of God. To His infinite age nothing can be added, and from it nothing subtracted. He is no older to-day than when the first star shot its first beams into the darkness of primeval time; nor will He be, when the last star has spent its fires and ceased to burn, should the event ever occur. I conceive of the divine existence, as I do of space and duration, as a fixed and changeless unit, existing now. This view is at least suggestive by the assertion: "Thus said the High and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity." Eternity is the equivalent of duration. God inhabits it, occupies it--all of it. "I am [now] Alpha and Omega--the beginning and the end, the first and the last." "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." "As God," says Dr. Hodge, "is free from the limitations of space, so is He exalted above the limitations of time. As He is no more in one place than in another, but everywhere equally present, so He does not exist in one period of duration more than in another. With Him there is no distinction between the past, present and the future, but all time is equally present. With Him duration is an eternal now. This is the popular and Scriptural view of God's eternity.<sup>27</sup> Whether this be the true view, or whether the phrase, "eternal now" represents any rational thought, it is certain the divine existence is a deep too profound for finite minds to fathom.

(5.) It is also conceded that the divine foreknowledge exerts no direct or casual influence upon human actions. If God foreknows an event will occur, it is certain to occur, but His foreknowledge neither makes it certain, nor to the slightest extent effects it. Indeed, it is not certain that

the word foreknowledge is not a mere accommodation to our finite capacities--that strictly, with God, there is any such thing. It is more probable that He foreknows the future, as we know the present as I know that A, whom I see, is in my room, and as I know what he is doing. No one will say my knowledge overrides his freedom, necessitates or even affects his actions. No more does the divine foreknowledge.

(6.) His providence extends to all creatures and events. In a sense, "He foreordains whatsoever comes to pass."

Thus far Christian men, with few exceptions, agree. The point of divergence and of chief interest pertains to the relation between the divine sovereignty on the one hand and the choices and destiny of men on the other. We reach the gist of the controversy by the question: "Is the divine sovereignty over human choices unlimited?" "Is the human will in necessary and perfect conformity with the divine?"

The affirmative answer to this question constitutes the essence of Calvinistic theology. This theology teaches that the choices and destiny of every man of Adam's race are unalterably determined by the divine will; that whatever occurs is either directly, or through the instrumentality of second causes, secured by the divine agency; that the ultimate reason one is holy and another unholy, one is saved and another unsaved, lies in the divine choice, and that nothing has occurred, or will occur, which God has not proposed and planned. "All things," says Calvin, "come to pass by the ordinance and decrees of God. He not only foresaw the fall of the first man and the ruin of his posterity, but He arranged all, by the determination of His will."<sup>28</sup> "He knows what He has determined to do with us. If He has determined our salvation, He will bring us to it in his own time. If He has destined us to death, it will be in vain to strive against it."<sup>29</sup> "Those whom He has created to a life of shame and a death of destruction, that they might be instruments of His wrath, or examples of His severity, He causes to reach their appointed end." "God could convert to good the will of the wicked, because He is omnipotent. It is evident He could. Why then did He not? Because He would not. Why He would not remains with Himself." "All the sins of men," says Edwards, "are ordained and ordered by a wise providence. . . . It may be argued from the power and wisdom of God that nothing can come to pass but that which must be agreeable to His will and pleasure should come to pass."<sup>30</sup> "It was His secret will," says Emmons, "that not only holiness and happiness, but

that sin and misery should take place among His intelligent creatures. . . . It was His secret will that Lucifer should rebel and Adam fall; that Judas should betray, and Peter deny Christ; . . . that all the elect should repent and believe, and that all the non-elect should die in unbelief."<sup>31</sup> All familiar with Calvinistic writings know that such quotations could be multiplied indefinitely. This doctrine stands in the fore-front, constituting the great central tenet of Calvinism. It holds that the relation between the divine will and human choices is not only one of certainty, but of necessity--that God determined the latter, not in the same way, nor by the same means, but as efficiently and irresistibly as He does the motions of matter.

This view, usually termed the doctrine of "Absolute Divine Sovereignty" is not self-evident, nor does it commend itself to the better judgment of men; and we may be assured it has not been accepted for more than twelve centuries by wise and good men, without the support of what have been deemed cogent reasons. The principal are:

(1.) The doctrine is implied in the word sovereignty, which means, it is claimed, such a supremacy over all other beings and things as to render successful resistance impossible. If, it is said, there is in the universe anything not subject to God's will, He is not supreme --there is something stronger than He. His plans are thwarted, and he stands before other intelligences the humbled and defeated monarch of a universe ungoverned and chaotic. Whatever else, it is claimed, is true or false, God is on the throne. His will is supreme, and every created being and thing are subservient to it. "If," says Edwards, "God does not in some way order what the volitions of men shall be, He would be as dependent, in governing the world, as the skillful mariner would be in governing the ship, in passing over a turbulent and tempestuous ocean, where he constantly meets with cross-winds, violent tempests, strong currents and great opposition from enemies, none of which things he has the disposal of."<sup>32</sup> God, he contends, could not be perfectly happy, were there anything occurring in the universe contrary to His will.

"The Apostle," says Dr. Chalmers, "contends for as great a mastery, on the part of God, over the spirits He has formed, as the potter has over the clay he fashions. If anything happens, not because the creator hath so appointed; but because of some power or liberty in the creature, that thing is beyond the scope and sovereignty of God. It hath made its

appearance in the universe unbidded and unwilling, and the history of man is abandoned to a wild misrule, through the caprice and confusion of which, not even omniscience can descry, beforehand, any character of certainty. If all things do not turn out with fixed, determinate certainty on earth. He who has been styled its governor occupies in heaven but a semblance of a throne. If man is not a necessary agent, God is a degraded sovereign."<sup>33</sup>

(2.) The second argument in support of the doctrine is based on the assumption that God's decrees are the logical antecedent of His foreknowledge. It is held as an axiomatic truth, that His prescience of an event is conditioned upon having previously, in the order of nature, decreed it. "God foreknows events," says Calvin, "only in consequence of decreeing them. He knows the future final fate of men, because it was appointed by His own decree." "God," says Edwards, "could not know an event would be, unless He had decreed it should be." "As God's foreknowledge," says Emmons, "is founded upon His decree, it must necessarily be bounded by it. It can not extend to anything but what He has decreed. There is one way and but one way by which He can foreknow all things from eternity--that is, by decreeing all things from eternity. . . . It is a palpable absurdity to extend the foreknowledge of God beyond His decrees."<sup>34</sup> The inference is plain, whatever is foreknown must have been rendered inevitable by His decree, and as God's foreknowledge extends to all human choices and actions, they must have been inevitably fixed in the order of nature before they could have been foreknown.

(3.) But the doctrine finds stronger support in the Calvinistic theory of freedom. The two great schools of theology agree that choices are events, having an adequate cause. They differ as to what this cause is. One finds it in motives, feelings, states of mind, lying back of the will; the other in the will itself. One makes the relation between motive and choice that of cause and effect; the other denies that there is any causal or coercive relation between the two. The latter make the will self-determining. They invest it with the power of contrary choice, and limit the influence of motive to solicitation or persuasion.

The latter view is fatal to the Calvinistic system, and is strenuously resisted by all consistent Calvinists. It is charged: (1.) With involving the absurdity of an event without a cause. (2.) With the absurdity of an act

before the first act; inasmuch as the will can not choose without previously determining to choose; and inasmuch as that previous determination requires one still previous, and so on, ad infinitum. (3.) With making the same causal power, without variation, in any respect, produce different effects, at different times. (4.) Consequently, with rendering divine foreknowledge of human choices, impossible, inasmuch as they are contingent, and in their nature uncertain, and, therefore, can not be foreknown as certain. These considerations, it is said, reduce the theory of freedom, as held by the anti-Calvinist, to an absurdity, and establish that of necessity, as the law governing moral beings.

The necessitarian theory being established, it requires no logical acumen to see that human choices are as irresistibly under the divine control as the currents of air or of ocean, and that the doctrine of Absolute Divine Sovereignty is not only logically proved, but philosophically explained.

(4.) But the argument having the greatest influence is drawn from the Divine Word. It is found in passages representing God as omnipotent, as working all things after the counsel of His own will; and especially in those which make wicked actions accord with His will, "counsel and foreknowledge," notably Acts, 2:23, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, by the hands of lawless men, ye did crucify and slay;" Acts, 4:27. "For of a truth against thy holy servant, Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, were gathered together, to do what thy hand and council foreordained to come to pass; Luke, 22:22, "The Son of Man goeth as it is determined, but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed;" Gen., 45:5, "God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and save you alive by a great deliverance, so now it was not you that sent me hither, but God." Ex., 4:1, "I have hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and the hearts of his servants, that I might show my signs in the midst of them." If, the argument is, the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ, the darkest deeds of human depravity, the sale of a defenseless youth into foreign slavery by his brothers, the sullen pride and disobedience of Egypt's monarch were planned and secured by the divine will, so are all the acts and crimes of men.

Plausible as these considerations appear, no one will deny that the doctrine lies open to some very serious objections.

A strong presumption against the Scriptural authority of the doctrine lies in the fact that no trace of it can be found during the earlier centuries of the Christian era. We have the testimony, unchallenged so far as I know, of our ablest church historians, that Augustine, of the fourth century, first gave it distinct utterance. "Every one," says Mosheim, "knows that the peculiar doctrines, to which the victory was assigned by the Synod of Dort, were absolutely unknown in the first ages of the church."<sup>35</sup> "Augustine," says Wiggers, "introduced into the ecclesiastical system several views entirely new. . . . Although some of the fathers before him, particularly of the Latin church, had some ideas analogous to his. . . . Yet from his doctrine of original sin, he developed doctrines hitherto unknown and unheard of in the Christian church. Amongst them were irresistible grace, absolute foreordination, and the limitation of redemption by Christ to the elect."<sup>36</sup>

(2.) A strong presumption against the doctrine also grows out of the repugnance and aversion every man, good or bad, feels toward it. From its birth it has encountered the most persistent opposition. It gained the victory, many thought, unfairly, over Arminianism, in the Synod of Dort, 1618, but on all sides it met the fiercest hostility. Mosheim tells us that five Dutch provinces "could not be persuaded to receive the doctrines of the Synod of Dort;" that "the French, although at first they seemed to favor the decisions of Dort, yet soon afterward began to think and teach very diversely from them;" that "among the Germans, neither the churches of Brandenburg, nor those of Bremen, would suffer their teachers to be tied down to the opinions of the Dutch;" that "England went over to the side of the Arminians immediately after the Synod of Dort; and quite to this day it has not so much neglected, as despised and condemned the doctrines of that council, and this was almost a necessary occurrence, since the English wished to conform their church to the institutions, opinions, and rules of the first centuries;" and that "these decisions were very offensive to the Papists."<sup>37</sup> Libraries have been written in their defense, yet it is doubtful whether they have attained popularity among the people of any church, or in any age. Assure the average man that "nothing can come to pass but what is the will and pleasure of God, should come to pass;" that "all things, both being's and events, exist in exact accordance with the will and pleasure of God;" that, in other words, history, with all its vices and cruelties, is but the programme which God devised, and during these six thousand years has

been executing, and you shock his sensibilities and arouse his indignation. Prove to him that this is the teaching of the Bible, and you have probably made another infidel. To represent God as ordaining conduct which He forbids and punishes, making men do the very thing He commands them not to do, revealing a will in exact antithesis to His secret and real will, is to insult the good sense of the average man.

(3.) This doctrine makes God the author of sin. This charge is, I am aware, strenuously denied by all Calvinists, but what other construction is it possible to give the assertion of Edwards: "The decrees of God are none other than His eternal doing that which is done."<sup>38</sup> Or of Dwight: "It is metaphysically proper to say, God wills all things into existence; that they are produced by His choice, in the sense that any effect is produced by its efficient cause."<sup>39</sup> If such language, indeed, if the doctrine of Absolute Divine Sovereignty, in any aspect, does not make God, not only the author of sin, but the chief and only sinner, it is, to say the least, very misleading.

To reconcile this doctrine with the divine perfections has been the problem of the centuries. To punish a moral being for that which it is not possible to avoid; to ordain and impose a life of sin, and remand the sinner to hell for leading it would doom the memory of any earthly sovereign to an immortality of shame. Has God done it?

A common and convenient mode of meeting the difficulty is to relegate the whole matter to the inscrutable will of God--assume that He can do nothing wrong, and to ask us to adore the wisdom and goodness which dooms men to a life of sin and an eternity of despair, without affording them the poor consolation of knowing why. Calvin charges with presumption those who even dare to inquire. "The will of God," he asserts, "is the highest rule of justice; so that what He wills must be just for the very reason that He wills it." Man, he claims, knows too little of God to question the wisdom of His counsels. "The Christian," he says, "may open his ears and heart to all addressed to him by his Lord, with this moderation, that as soon as the Lord closes His sacred mouth, he shall desist from all further inquiry."<sup>40</sup>

This is a convenient mode of dealing with the problem, but neither satisfactory nor safe--one which in the end will prove a weapon of double edge. Ultimate reliance upon one's own intuitions is the basis of all faith

and religion. He who loses confidence in himself is adrift, and can have confidence in nothing. How can I believe in the existence of God without relying upon the faculty by which He is apprehended, and by which the proof of his existence is weighed? If I am not competent to say, "Making a man steal, and then punishing him for stealing is unjust," I am not competent to pronounce any of the ways of God just. If my intuitions are unreliable in the one case--they can not be trusted in the other.

The old patriarch<sup>41</sup> assumed his own idea of right to be the absolute standard of right, and he reverently arraigns the ways of God before this awful tribunal. The mind instinctively decides upon the quality of moral actions, and can not but regard as infallible its own intuitions; and God, while challenging the profoundest reverence, frequently appeals to them as an unerring arbiter of right and wrong. To ascribe to Him conduct abhorrent to our sense of justice, and justify it on the ground of His unerring rectitude, dishonors Him and degrades ourselves.

A more plausible solution of the problem was adopted by the New England Divines, to wit: Sin is the necessary means to the highest good, and was divinely chosen, not for its own sake, or for any inscrutable reason, but as nauseous medicine is chosen, for the good which comes of it. God, they claimed, was bound to secure the highest good of His domain, and if sin is a necessary means to this end, He is justifiable in both allowing and ordaining it.

(1.) But this solution involves the very difficulty the Absolute Sovereignty doctrine was devised to escape. It limits God, by assuming He is not sufficiently wise and powerful to secure the highest welfare of his creatures, without making this world the habitation of cruelty, and peopling hell with uncounted millions of his own offspring. If we must limit God at all, let us, by all means, limit His ability to determine the choices of free, intelligent beings.

(2.) According to this theory the sinner's life of sin is in harmony with the divine will, and is contributing, as no other life could, to the general good: sin is productive of more good than holiness--better subserves the interests of the universe; therefore, it is not only justifiable, but obligatory. In other words, there can be no such thing as sin. Should it be said, as sin lies in the intention exclusively, a man's outward conduct may be made to conform to the divine will, while he remains a sinner. I answer, if

it be conceded that men's intentions are not determined by the divine will, the whole system of Calvinism is abandoned.

(3.) A third objection to the doctrine is, it involves the theory of a necessitated will. While its advocates talk about "liberty," "freedom," "free-agency," "self-determining power of the agent," etc., all the liberty they allow, or their system admits, is a kind of unrestricted outflow of character, feeling, and states of minds. Says Dr. Hodge, voicing the views generally entertained by his school, "A man is free, when his volitions are truly and properly his own, determined by nothing out of himself, and proceeding from his own feelings, views, and imminent states of mind, so that they are really conscious expressions of his own character."<sup>42</sup> "A man is free so long as his volitions are the conscious expressions of his own mind, controlled by his own reason and feelings."<sup>43</sup> "Free-agency is the power to decide according to one's own character."<sup>44</sup> "A man is a free, responsible agent, because he is author of his own acts, and is determined by nothing out of himself."<sup>45</sup> So long as an animal is allowed to act under the control of its own nature, determined in all it does by what is within itself, it has all the liberty of which it is capable; and so long as a man is determined in his volitions and acts by his own reason and feelings, he has all the liberty of which he is capable. If you detach the acts of an animal from its own inward state, its liberty is gone; and if the acts of a man are not determined by his reason and feelings, he is a puppet or a maniac."<sup>46</sup> "Liberty," says Edwards, "is a power of acting from ourselves, or of doing as we will."<sup>47</sup>

(1.) These are the studied definitions of necessitarianism. The liberty they describe is simply ability to yield to inward impulses, free from coercion or restraint, or to carry choices into execution. It is the liberty of the rill, whose motion proceeding from its own nature and laws, is its own, or of the wheel which is allowed to yield, without obstruction, to the pressure of steam. It lacks the first element of freedom.

Every child knows that choice, in its very nature, is election, implying an alternative, or more than one possibility. Ability to choose in one, and but one direction--the one determined by reason and feeling, is the essence of necessity. Freedom is the power of contrary choice, or ability to choose in either of two directions--the one in which we do actually choose, or the opposite. This power is the one essential element of freedom. Choice, in the presence of a single possibility, is an absurdity, a self-contradiction.

But this power of contrary choice is the sovereignty of the will. It is ability to choose, wherever choice is possible, in opposition to any and every influence, ab extra or ab intra, human or divine--the awful power to "resist the Holy Ghost." It is the irreconcilable antithesis of the doctrine of Absolute Divine Sovereignty, and as a theory is and must be rejected by the consistent advocates of this doctrine. "The will," says Dr. Charles Hodge, "is not independent or self-determined, but always determined by the previous state of mind."<sup>48</sup> "We can not conceive," he says, "that a man may be conscious that, with his principles, feelings, and inclinations being one way, his will may be another way."<sup>49</sup> He admits that a man could do other than he does, were his views and inclinations different, but these being given, he affirms, choices other than those actually made are not conceivable. I know not how the theory of necessity could be more clearly stated. Professor Atwater,<sup>50</sup> in his article "On the Power of Contrary Choice," says: "This contrary choice is made, or it is not made. If made, the will chooses the contrary to what it does choose. If not made, the conditions were wanting in it, as a cause adequate to the effect, in the absence of which, it is inadequate to the effect."<sup>51</sup> That is the fact a man does not make a contrary choice is proof that he can not, because a man, in a given state of mind, can not choose otherwise than he actually does choose. Certainly neither Collins nor Hobbs, the followers of Mohammed, or of Zeno could ask for a fatalism more pronounced or undisguised. But this fatalistic theory is involved in the doctrine of Absolute Divine Sovereignty. The logical mind which accepts one must accept both, as they are only different statements of the same thought.

It is possible some who reject the theory of necessity may still hold that God ordained the programme of human conduct, but secures its realization by moral influences; but we shrink from the belief that any one can bring such a charge against his Creator. To make an automaton do mischief is bad enough, but to induce moral being's to sin, and thus become partakers of their guilt is incalculably worse. God "can not be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."

(5.) The fifth objection to unlimited Divine Sovereignty is its direct antithesis to the whole spirit and letter of the Divine Word. No two things can be in distinct antagonism. The comprehensive teaching of the one is, God hates sin, and is employing His infinite resources to minimize and

extirpate it; while that of the other is, all sin and all the death it achieves, comes of the foreordination of God. The language of the one is, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live;" while that of the other is "All things, both beings and events, exist in exact accordance with the will and pleasure of God." One exclaims, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me; nay compassions are kindled together." "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how oft would I have gathered thy children together . . . but ye would not." The other, "Nothing occurs in the universe contrary to the will of God." The prayer the one teaches the church to offer is: "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." The other teaches that there is no need of such a prayer, as no heart ever beat, and no event ever occurred or ever can, out of harmony with the divine will. "Surely we need not travel in heathen countries to learn how mournfully the human mind can misrepresent the Deity."

These are some of the difficulties which environ the doctrine of unlimited Divine Sovereignty. Are the considerations sustaining the doctrine sufficiently cogent to set them aside? Let us refer to them again:

(1.) The doctrine, it is claimed, is implied in the idea of Sovereignty, and in those Scriptures which warrant its application to God. The word, though not found in the Bible, is doubtless properly applied to God. So it is to the Czar of all the Russias; but it does not necessarily represent unlimited control in either case. No one doubts that God's power is limited by the nature of things. He can not create two mountains without a valley between, or add a century to the age of a man, in a single hour, or do anything which involves a self-contradiction. Still He is Sovereign. Then certainly the assertion, He can not coerce human choices, inasmuch as a choice coerced is not a choice, but a self-contradiction; or the assertion, He can not justly hold moral beings responsible for the manner in which He controls their wills, inasmuch as a moral being can not be responsible beyond his own voluntary agency is not a denial of His sovereignty. The sovereignty of God, and the sovereignty of the human will in its choices, are not inconsistent with each other. He who accepts the one does not necessarily reject the other.

(2.) The second argument, to-wit: God's foreknowledge, which embraces

all events, is conditioned upon His decrees; therefore, all events must have been determined, and unchangeably settled, in the order of nature, before they could be foreknown, is based upon the arrogant and groundless assumption that we understand how the Infinite Intelligence foreknows. It also limits the foreknowledge of God to the actual, which to the possible, is as infinity to nothing, and is not deserving a moment's consideration.

(3.) The third argument is based upon the theory of a necessitated will, and is defended by the alleged absurdities of the opposite theory--its only alternative--involve, to-wit: (1.) That of an event without a cause. (2.) That of a choice before the first choice. (3.) The assumption that the same causal influence, without variation, may produce different effects at different times. (4.) That of putting human choices beyond the divine prescience, by rendering them contingent, and in their nature uncertain.

These objections are urged, by Edwards, with masterly ability, and the conclusion he reaches is that "the Arminian notion of liberty, consisting in the self-determination of the will, is repugnant to itself, and wholly shuts itself out of the world."

These objections, it will not be denied, are weighty. The will chooses, it moves. What moves it? There must be some cause. Can it move itself--be both actor and acted upon--both determiner and determined? We should unhesitatingly answer no, did the will belong to the realm of the material, were it a link in the chain of cause and effect.

Is it not just here that Edwards and the great school he represents stumble? Do they not fail to recognize the will as a Creator--the mysterious living soul itself of all created causes the most subtle and mysterious, as utterly outside the domain of natural law? Is the relation between motive and choice that of cause and effect? Do not motives lead to results they have no inherent energy to produce? A threat against one's personal safety leads to the purpose to escape the country, or a threat to burn his dwelling leads to the purpose of getting it insured. Where does the efficiency reside? Manifestly not in the motive. It is but the occasion, the solicitor, and not the efficient cause of the purpose. Between the two there comes in a creative power, which, under the impulse of motive, originates the purpose, and that power resides in the will. The will is the efficient cause of choice, else choice is an event

without a cause. It is the necessitarian theory which involves the absurdity.

(2.) The charge that the theory of free-will involves the absurdity of an act before the first act, is based, we think, upon an utter misapprehension of the facts. Subordinate choices imply, doubtless, an ultimate choice, of which they are but the execution; but a moment's reflection must satisfy any one that the idea one can not choose without previously determining to choose is without the slightest foundation. The assertion "I formed a purpose," "I made a resolution," are common, I am aware, yet the thing asserted is neither true nor possible. We never determine to choose--we choose. We never will to will--we will. An act of will requires no previous determination.

(3.) The objection that ability to choose in either of two opposite directions assumes that the same cause, without variation, may, at one time, produce one effect, at another, another, and is a denial of the uniformity of nature's laws, and, therefore, absurd, would have weight were the soul and its operations subject to natural law. As it is, we can not see the force of the objection.

(4.) The fourth objection, to-wit: choices which are contingent, and, therefore, in their nature uncertain, can not be foreknown as certainties, even to the Divine Mind, is urged by Edwards, with the power which characterized that great logician. "To say," he says, "God certainly, and without any conjecture, knows that a thing will infallibly be, which, at the same time, He knows to be so contingent, that it may possibly not be, is to suppose his knowledge is inconsistent with itself; or that one thing he knows is utterly inconsistent with another thing he knows." The consideration that God inhabits eternity, and sustains a relation to time wholly inexplicable to us, removes, it seems to me, all the force of this objection.

The advocates of free-will hold that the soul, by its own inherent energy, creates, originates its own choices. They do not claim to understand how; they accept the fact as unique and ultimate, as one of those verities of reason and consciousness which admit of no explanation. The idea itself is certainly not absurd; for it is admitted, on all hands, that the divine will originates choices. It is then simply a question of fact, whether other beings, created in the similitude of God, have not the same awful

prerogative. Would the creation of beings, sovereign of their own choices, and therefore responsible for them, though it involves self-limitations, degrade the Creator?

Which is the greater, the monarch of a universe of free, responsible intelligences, or the monarch of a universe of machinery? Which is the greater, a being governed by the law of right, or one governed by the law of gravitation? The effort to extol God by denying the sovereignty of the human will is an effort to extol the Creator by demeaning the creation. It is like extolling Milton by decrying his great poems. No grander conception of the power and wisdom of God can be conceived than that reflected from the mechanism and control of beings capable of resisting the divine will and disobeying the divine law.

The power of contrary choice, involving a divine self-limitation, like the idea of space, and time, and cause, is given in the reason of every rational being. The great work, in which Edwards labors to overthrow this truth, though one of the proudest monuments of analytic reasoning ever lifted by human thought, is a splendid failure. Though by so many deemed unanswerable, it satisfies no one. It is an effort to disprove an intuition--an intuition the author practically asserted every day and hour of his life.

(5.) A fifth argument for the doctrine of absolute sovereignty lies in the existence of moral evil. Sin exists, it is said; God could have prevented it, and would had He not, on the whole, preferred it should exist. Preferred to what? What was the alternative? The argument assumes it was a system of moral beings like ourselves, with sin, or such a system without sin. Are we sure this was the alternative presented to the divine choice? Might it not have been moral beings with sin, or no moral beings at all? Who can affirm that sin is not, so far as relates to God, inevitable to a system of free, intelligent, responsible agents? It would be illogical to infer that the early graves of so many of their missionaries accord with the will and pleasure of the American Board, because they could, but do not prevent the sacrifice. The alternative before them is these early graves, or the world left to perish in heathenism, and with a degree of pain that knows no measure, after having done all in their power to minimize the loss, they submit to it as the least of two evils. Equally illogical is the inference that sin is in accord with the divine will because it has not been prevented.

This explanation of the great problem differs, *toto coelo*, from the "necessary means to the greatest good" theory. The one holds that God has absolute control over human choices, and allows sin for the good which comes of it. The other denies any such control, and claims that, for aught we know, the prevention of sin, in a system of moral beings, involves a self-contradiction, and lies without the pale of omnipotence. It claims that sin, so far from being "a means to the highest good," is a means of no good at all; that it is an evil and only an evil, and that unless overruled and counteracted in all its tendencies, it results only in evil; and that, only as the least of two evils is it allowed in the government of God. In this sense it may possibly be said "God permissively foreordains whatsoever comes to pass;" but much of it, I think, He foreordains as the victim ordains to give up his purse, when the alternative is that or his life.

We are not called upon to account for the existence of moral evil. All we need assert is that it is not necessary to resort to the doctrine of absolute sovereignty as a solution of the problem.

5- The fifth argument in defense of this doctrine is drawn from the Sacred Word.

(1.) A true exegesis of Romans 9, so largely relied upon by the advocates of the Absolute Sovereignty doctrine, will show, I think, that it relates to national and not personal election, to the present and not to the future life, and has consequently no bearing on the subject; but with any rational interpretation that it falls far short of establishing the doctrine of divine absolute sovereignty.

(2.) Passages which represent God as doing according to His will, ruling over all, working all things after the counsel of His own will, are admittedly consistent with limitations of His power, growing out of the nature of things; and it only for such limitations we contend.

(3.) The passages which represent God as "hardening the heart," ordaining and controlling the expressions of depravity, reveal God's hatred of sin, and His infinite desire to repress and counteract it, and, of all others, are the very ones which disapprove the doctrine, they are so largely relied upon to establish. Take for illustration the case of Joseph's brethren. God, no one can doubt, had done all He wisely could to secure their repentance; but they had resisted divine influences, and grown to manhood hardened in sin, and now they determine to shed the blood of

their defenceless brother; Reuben, unable to resist their depravity, endeavors to divert it into a channel from which the least evil would come. Let us, he said, not shed his blood, but cast him into a pit. This he did with a view of restoring him to his father. In accord with his suggestion the hapless child is cast into a pit and left to perish. This has a bad look; but the verdict of four thousand years acquits Reuben of being a partaker of their sin, and approves his conduct as both just and humane. He simply endeavored to give depravity, which he could not prevent, a direction which would render it harmless. The lava from the burning Vesuvius would flow, and he simply attempted to dig a channel through which it would pour itself into the sea, at the least expense of life and property--just what good men love to do.

In that lonely wilderness there was a greater Actor, never absent when His children are in distress, Who, with infinitely more wisdom, is ceaselessly working in the same direction. He induces these men to sell their brother to a company of Ishmaelites, whose presence He secures, and thus saves the youth's life, and sends him on his great mission down to Egypt. No wonder Joseph, years after, reviewing the way God had led him, from a heart swelling with gratitude, should exclaim: "God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant on the earth, and to save you alive, with a great deliverance: so now it was not you who sent me hither, but God." This is but an illustration of the way God is counteracting and overruling the powers of evil, and making the wrath of men praise Him.

He hardened the heart of the Egyptian monarch, which necessarily means nothing more than that He blunted his instincts, petrified his feelings, and rendered the man fool-hardy and insensible to danger, and in this way gave direction to depravity He could not consistently prevent. Moral character resides exclusively in the ultimate choice. Its expressions, or executive volitions, are strictly neither right nor wrong. In securing the one by which He could punish Egypt, impress His people with the greatness of His power, and best subserve His kingdom, God neither tempted the man to sin, nor to the slightest extent increased his guilt. Of the different outlets of the great sea of depravity, He simply selects the one out of which the least evil will flow. Otherwise our world would have been a hell long ago. Certainly the doctrine of Absolute Sovereignty finds no countenance here.

The same general explanation applies to Acts 2:23 and Acts 4:28, and

passages of like import, and relieve them of all complicity with the doctrine under review.

(4.) Does the Doctrine of Election afford any support to that of Absolute Sovereignty? The doctrine imports that God, before the foundation of the world, chose a part of Adam's race unto holiness and eternal life, and determined to leave the remainder to perish in their sins. Whether this doctrine favors the Absolute Sovereignty view, depends upon the interpretation which should be given it.

But two are possible. One is the ground of this discrimination or the ultimate reason one accepts Christ and is saved, and another rejects Him and is lost, lies in the divine will; the other is that it lies in the human will. If the former is clearly taught in the Sacred Word, the doctrine of Absolute Sovereignty must be accepted as the theology of the Bible.

A strong presumption against the former view lies in the inference so generally drawn from it, to-wit: "If I am elected to be saved, I shall be; if to be damned, I shall be, and can not help it." This inference has proved a snare to millions, and when accepted is, to all Christian endeavor, what the millstone is to the swimmer. Is this inference legitimate? I answer, it can hardly be called an inference; it is the doctrine of unconditional election in its simplest statement--the doctrine precisely as Calvin puts it. "If," he says, "God has determined our salvation, He will bring us to it in His own time. If He has destined us to death, it will be in vain to strive against it."

Do the Scriptures give the reason God elected A. and not B. rather the reason He did not elect both? There must be a reason of stupendous weight. That mother saved one of her darlings from the burning wreck. Why did she not save all? There must have been some obstacle in the way, before which she was powerless. Such an obstacle--with reverence we say it--must have been in the way of saving all, or He Who would have all men to be saved, would have saved all.

Can there be any rational doubt where that obstacle lies? Can any one believe it lies in the divine will, that it is one its single volition can remove, in the presence of such declarations as these: "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life." "How oft would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not." "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Could clearer complaint, of insurmountable obstacles in the

way of God be made, than in such passages as these: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" "What more could have been done in my vineyard that I have not done in it?" and hundreds of others of similar import. Would such passages be possible did the destiny of men depend ultimately on the divine will? The whole mystery of lost souls is solved by the simple truth: "God hath endured the will of man with that natural liberty that it is neither forced, nor, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good or evil."

While it is beyond reasonable doubt that the ultimate reason all are not saved lies in the human will, we can not accept the extreme statement that God conditioned election upon foreseen holiness. Since holiness and salvation are nearly synonymous terms; this statement confounds cause and effect, and is equivalent to saying: "God elected men to holiness because He foresaw they would be holy; or elected them to salvation because He foresaw they would be saved," and fritters away one of the grandest doctrines of the Bible--the one on which rests every human hope of the future.

A middle ground is vastly more Scriptural and satisfactory, to-wit: God elected all whom He foresaw could, by the wisest administration of His government, and the most skillful possible use of means, be led to repentance. Others He did not elect, for sufficient reason it would have done no good. The election of all the kindreds of the earth would not have left another name unblotted from the Book of Life.

We shall not be understood to affirm that no one will be lost whom it is possible to save. A man may perish in unbelief, whom D. L. Moody could lead to repentance, were he to devote the remainder of his life to that one work. We say D. L. Moody could save the man, but not wisely. Doubtless, men may be lost whom God could save, but none He could wisely save. All we are authorized to say is: God is infinitely wise and benevolent; He values men above constellations burning on the sky, and He will gather unto Himself, as great a company as possible, out of all nations and tribes, and no one will perish on whose grave-stone unseen fingers will not write, "Thou hast destroyed thyself."

The Great King has spread the festal board, and all He foreknew could be persuaded to accept his bounty, are "the elect according to the foreknowledge of God." "For whom he foreknew he also foreordained to

be conformed to the image of His Son." The feast originated in the divine love. The ultimate reason any soul becomes a partaker lies in the divine will. To Christ, and to Christ alone, we owe all, and unto Him be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion "unto the ages of the ages." Still we claim the feast was spread for all; that there is no insincerity in the invitation, "Whosoever will," and that the sole reason any one fails to be a partaker lies in his persistent refusal to accept. If, as is generally believed, there is strictly no such thing as foreknowledge with God--if in place of foreseeing what men will do, He sees what they are doing, the apparent anachronism of the injunction, "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure," disappears, and it becomes perfectly manifest each individual decides for himself whether he is, or is not, one of the elect.

With sincere respect for the opinions of great and good men, I am compelled to say, I find no valid support in the Word of God, nor out of it, for the doctrine of Uncondition of Election, or of unlimited Divine Sovereignty. They both seem to me unspeakably dishonorable to God, disastrous in their influence upon men, and utterly false. Calvinism is the eighth wonder of the world. The influence of that cold, heartless man, whose name it bears, and the cold Christless theology he taught, upon the thinking of the centuries, is an enigma I have no means of solving. It is not easy to understand how any right-minded, intelligent man can sincerely accept his views. Indeed, I have prepared this paper under the painful impression that many of my readers will accuse me of fighting a mere fiction. This would be unjust. We need not go outside the city in which I reside to find theological lecture rooms in which these doctrines are not only defended, but made the test of orthodoxy.

These views are largely kept in the background, and are largely neutralized by the living truths with which they are associated; still, I can not doubt they have smitten some churches, and a great many individuals, with spiritual paralysis, and that this is their necessary tendency. Let us suppose the friend, with whom I have long been in daily companionship, and have done little or nothing to save, dies impenitent. What is the effect of the secret belief that all--his life of sin, his death of despair, and my own defective influence--was divinely ordered? In what contrast, on the other hand, would be the conviction that the Holy Spirit needed but my prayers and faithful co-operation to secure his

repentance, and that a soul has perished, because they were withheld. What an opiate the one! How like a startling mid-night cry the other!

I have no doubt, as the fogs of a false theology are dispersed, and the awful truths and responsibilities of moral existence loom into distincter vision, the people of God will either rise to a higher plane of Christian endeavor, or materially modify their views of the future of incorrigible men. Either a modified eschatology, or a more earnest consecration to the work of saving men, is one of the inevitable events of the near future.

## **VI. THE ATONEMENT**

THAT Christ's sufferings came upon Him because of human sin, and that on the ground of these sufferings, and upon no other, the believer is delivered from the penalty of the divine law, is a truth occupying a large place in the Sacred Oracles, and in the creeds and convictions of the Christian world.

Pardon in human government, without something to take the place of punishment, equally influential in sustaining the majesty of law, would weaken its restraints, embolden the criminally disposed, compromise the government, and in effect abrogate law. In the divine government, we have no reason to doubt the effect would be as much more disastrous as the interests involved are greater. We have the best reason for believing that no such event as pardon without an atonement has ever occurred in the government of God. The gist of the Gospel is the glad announcement that such a substitute has been provided in the sufferings and death of Christ, and in consequence, God can be just and justify him that believeth in Jesus.

This is the doctrine of the atonement, and nothing more than reliance upon this is essential to saving faith. Its enough to know that--

"Sinners may hope since the Sinless hath died."

But this is not all the Christian craves in reference to this great theme: he wants a theory of the atonement; he wants to know how the sacrifice of Christ availed to render sin pardonable--wherein lies its efficacy to remove the obstacles in the way of forgiveness. In other words, how salvation comes through suffering. Perhaps no subject in the realm of

theology has elicited more thought and discussion. Says Dr. Dale: "There is a direct relation between the death of Christ and the remission of sins. The inquiry into the ground of this relation is an inquiry of stupendous speculative importance, and may possibly issue in discoveries concerning the ways of God of transcendent practical interest."<sup>52</sup> He deems it impossible not to have a theory of the atonement.

Four theories have, to a greater or less extent, commanded the suffrages of the Christian world:

(1.) The one largely accepted through the early centuries of the Christian church is given by Professor Knapp as follows: "Ever after the fall, the devil had the whole human race in his power; he ruled them like a tyrant over his vassals, and employed them for his own purposes. From this captivity God could indeed have restored them by the exercise of His omnipotence, but He was restrained by His sense of justice from doing this with violence. He therefore offered Satan a ransom, in consideration of which he should release mankind. This ransom was the death of Christ."<sup>53</sup> "This theory," the same writer informs us, "some traces of which had appeared during the second century, became prominent during the third and fourth centuries, and continued a long time the prevailing theory among the learned of the Greek and Latin churches. It was held by Augustine, through whose influence it became almost universal in the Latin church."<sup>54</sup> "This rude and coarse hypothesis," says Dr. Dale, "maintained its place in the church for nearly a thousand years. Early in the third century it had been sanctioned by the great authority of Origen; in the twelfth century, when St. Bernard wrote, it must still have been the popular theory."

This view was probably suggested and defended by such passages as Col. 1:13: "Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." Acts 2:14: "That through death He might bring to nought him that hath the power of death, that is the devil." 1 John 3:8: "To this end was the Son of Man manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

(2.) The second, I notice, is usually termed the "moral influence theory." This theory limits the efficacy of Christ's death to Adam's race--making its value consist, not in its influence upon the divine mind, nor upon the universe at large, but in its power to subdue the enmity of human hearts.

His death was a great appeal of the divine love to the human race--God's method of overcoming human depravity, without any direct relation to the forgiveness of sin. The idea that Christ's sacrifice expiated sin, or placated the divine wrath by means of suffering, or satisfied divine justice, finds no place in this theory. The only obstacle in the way of forgiving sin ever existing, and the only one Christ's death was designed to overcome, is the sinner's unbelief and hardness of heart. This removed, God can be just, and justify him that believeth in Jesus.

The arguments sustaining this view are, in the main, of a negative character. (1.) The word atonement conveys no other idea than that of covering or removing sin. (2.) The blood of Christ, no other than that of cleansing. (3.) The fact that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself," is the comprehensive summary of the New Testament.

This is very unsatisfactory as a theory of the atonement. To answer the question, how do the sufferings and death of Christ justify the pardon of believers, by saying the pardon of believers needs no justification, savors more of a denial of the atonement than of a theory.

(2.) Doubtless the love and sacrifice of Christ to save men is immeasurably the strongest motive to repentance ever brought to bear on human hearts; but to say this was all they were designed to secure, and this exhausts their whole sufficiency, contradicts the word of God, and the verdict the Church of Christ has been giving for near two thousand years.

(3.) If this theory be true, Christ's death was not essential to the pardon of sin. It was but a vast accession to the moral influence calculated to lead men to repentance. Repentance, however secured, is the only prerequisite to forgiveness. Nor, if this theory be true, is Christ the only atoning sacrifice. Many a mother, by her love and suffering, has led her wayward child to the lowliness of truth, and has done just what the death of Christ was designed to do, and has as truly made an atonement for sin as He. Patriarchs and prophets, and multitudes of others who never heard of the Historic Christ have, by other moral influences, been won to repentance. There are other names given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved, and without the shedding of blood there is remission. This view, presented with great ability by Dr. Bushnell and others, can have, we think, but a very limited following.

(3.) The third theory we notice, usually termed the penal, and largely accepted by the Christian world, places the necessity of Christ's sacrifice in the divine mind, its primary object being to satisfy divine justice. This was effected by accepting Christ as the substitute for sinners, and inflicting upon Him the penalty, or its equivalent, due their sins. The divine anger is appeased, justice is satisfied, and sin may be pardoned, because it has already been adequately punished in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The gist of the theory is the assumption, as an intuitive truth, that sin, on account of its own intrinsic demerit, deserves punishment, and justice lays an obligation upon God, He can not without moral delinquency disregard, to punish it in every case up to its full deserts. "We maintain," says Professor A. A. Hodge, "that God's immutable nature demands the punishment of sin, and therefore Christ, when made to accept the place of sinners, suffered that punishment. . . . Divine justice is an exalted attribute of divine perfection, determining God always to treat moral beings as they deserve, and he punished sin because this attribute of justice demands that sin shall be treated appropriately to its nature."<sup>55</sup> "The intrinsic, unchangeable perfections of the divine nature, lying back and determining the divine will, determines Him certainly, and most fully, to punish all sin because of His essential holiness, and its essential demerit."<sup>56</sup> "It is inconceivable that God should, in a single instance, fail to punish sin as a demerit. There has often been forgiveness for the sinner, but not in a single instance forgiveness of sin; and the sinner is never forgiven except on condition of condign punishment."<sup>57</sup> We believe," says Spurgeon, "that God is so just, that every sinner must be punished. The way God saves sinners is not by passing over the penalty."

It is not claimed that Christ suffered as much as all the redeemed would have endured throughout the immortality of their existence, had no pardon been provided. The dignity of the sufferer gave value to the sufferings, and made up in quality what was lacking in quantity. But it is claimed that the sufferings of Christ were a full equivalent of all that have been and will be saved, deserve, and would have endured, had the sentence of the law been executed in its full rigor. "Christ suffered," says Prof. A. A. Hodge, "that kind, and degree, and duration of suffering that the infinitely wise justice, or the absolutely just wisdom of God

determined was a full equivalent of all that was demanded of elect sinners, in person--equivalent, we mean, in respect to sin expiating and justice satisfying efficacy, and a full equivalent in being of equal efficacy in these respects in strict rigor of justice, according to the judgment of God. Consequently, what Christ suffered was by no means the same with what His people would have suffered as suffering, but precisely the same, when considered as penalty."

The idea, it must be admitted, that the primary and immediate object of the penalty of law is the satisfaction of God's sense of justice, and that Christ in a few hours suffered an equivalent of all that the billions of the saved would have suffered had no ransom been provided, strikes the thoughtful mind as antecedently improbable, and certainly as a theory which should not be accepted in the absence of the most unequivocal Biblical proof. But its advocates unhesitatingly accept the burden of proof and adduce in its support:

(1.) Jewish sacrifices. These offerings of bullock, heifer and lamb, it is asserted, were in every case expiatory, and the expiation was in every case effected by vicarious punishment. The victim stood in the place of the offender, and died in his stead, bearing his guilt and the penalty his guilt deserved--thus symbolically satisfying the claims of justice, and rendering God just in forgiving. The victim on the altar was the type and representative of Christ, and what its death symbolized, His death realized.

This argument summarizes the whole Biblical support of the penal theory; for all the representations of the great sacrifice borrow their costume and significance from the Jewish sacrificial system, and are to be interpreted in the light of that system. If the sacrifices on Jewish altars were expiatory and penal, so was the death of Christ. If they were not, the penal theory of the atonement has no Biblical support.

The Jewish sacrifice undoubtedly symbolized the removing, the covering, putting away of sin. The word (Hebrew text)--atonement--the word by which these offerings were designated, signifies a covering, because the thing denoted was a covering of sin. Something that removes from sight, or hides, and enables God to treat the sinner as though it did not exist. This simple idea of removing, covering, exhausts the meaning of the word "(Hebrew text)." It is never used," says Doctor Griffin, "in a single

instance, by whatever word translated, to express any other meaning, except when applied to things wholly remote from the subject."<sup>58</sup> This is the whole meaning of the Jewish system of sacrifices. They simply pointed to the death of a Redeemer to come, and typified the great transaction which would so remove sin as to render God just in forgiving.

This is the doctrine of the atonement. The theory relates to the question, How do the sufferings and death of Christ remove or render sin pardonable? The penal theory answers by exacting its full desert, and thus satisfying divine justice. The question before us is, Is this theory sanctioned by the Divine Word, or is it a mere speculation? Its advocates claim that it is involved in the system of sacrifices. What is the evidence?

(1.) A somewhat patient examination fails to find the slightest coloring or trace of such an idea in the history of Jewish offerings. We fail to find the word expiation, or any thought answering to the idea the word conveys, in the system of Jewish sacrifices, or in the Word of God. The idea that Christ's sacrifice pacified the anger of God, or satisfied His sense of justice, seems to us clearly antithetical to the whole spirit and teaching of the Sacred Scriptures. We find abundance of proof that Christ's death satisfied the love of God--none that it satisfied His sense of justice. "God commendeth His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "God so loved the world He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish." The great sacrifice was, on the part of God, the outflow, not of retributive justice, but of love--of compassion, not of anger.

(2.) I find in the history of Jewish sacrifice no intimation the victim bore the penalty of the offender's sin, or that there was about its death anything penal. There is no allusion anywhere to punishment, to the victim's sufferings, nor an intimation they were of the slightest value.

(3.) The one overshadowing thought, vast in its simplicity, which runs through the whole sacrificial system, is the victim's death removes, or atones sin, blood cleanseth, and every drop shed in these rites was emblematic of the blood to be shed on a vaster theater to cleanse human guilt. The sins of the people were symbolically transferred to the animal, and its blood symbolically washed them away. "For," says the record, "it is the blood that maketh atonement," not the suffering. "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." "Washed in His blood."

This thought is impressively illustrated by the ceremony on the great day of Atonement. The High Priest laid his hands on the head of the scape-goat, confessed over it the sins of the people, symbolically transferred them to the animal, and then sent it away into the wilderness, where they should never be heard of more. The record is: "The goat shall bear upon him their iniquities into a solitary land." That ceremony is called an atonement. The animal typified Christ, who has done for His people just what that animal is represented as doing for the congregation of Israel. "He taketh away the sins of the world." "He hath borne," not our punishment, but "our sins in His own body on the tree." "He was manifested to take away our sins."

These Jewish offerings were not only didactic--they were also intercessory. The hour of sacrifice was the hour of prayer. Like the Lord's Supper, their design was to "proclaim the Lord's death," not to men only, but to God. They were a solemn appeal--a voiceless prayer, which translates itself into every tongue. Their impressive language was, "Thou canst forgive sin." They held up and pressed before the Eternal Mind this great fact, for the purpose of securing the richest boon God grants. The transaction, so far from being the sad, doleful spectacle of punishment and suffering, was the Proclamation of the gladdest truth inspiration suggests. The Jewish sacrifice, like the Lord's Supper, was a eucharist.

I can see nothing in the history of Jewish sacrifices inconsistent [sic.] with the idea that Christ endured the full penalty of human sin, thus rendering the punishment of those for whom He died unnecessary and unjust; nor can I find the slightest support for such a theory. The system, I think, gives us no clew to a theory of the atonement. It only teaches that Christ's sufferings and death so removed and covered sin, that God can treat the penitent sinner as though it had never been. How the theologians could attach to this grandly simple truth the complicated penal theory, which has required so many libraries to explain and defend, passes understanding. The infelicity of the Calvinistic theology has ever been the incredible amount of useless lumber it carries.

(2.) The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is largely relied upon to sustain the penal theory. "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are

healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; and we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "For the transgression of my people was He stricken." "When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed. He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in is hand." This language does not assert nor naturally suggest that Christ bore the penalty due to human sin. Such language as "bearing our sorrows," "carrying our grief," "wounded, bruised," chastened with stripes, is not an adequate representation of suffering equivalent to all the redeemed would have endured through endless years, had no Saviour been provided. All the language necessarily means is Christ suffered in consequence of the infirmities and the sins of men, and this is the interpretation of the passage given by the Evangelist Matt. 8:16: "And when evening was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils, and he cast them out by his word, and he healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.'" He bore them, the meaning seems to be, as the mother bears the sickness and suffering of her child. He put His arms beneath the unfortunate and despairing, and mingled His with the great sea of tears that were falling.

Whether ministrations to men's temporal wants exhaust the whole meaning of this prophecy is not, the whole trend of the Bible assures us, that such ministrations fall infinitely short of Christ's mission and work in this world. "He tasted death for every man." His sufferings were vicarious. They took the place of the penalty of the law, because they met the same necessity, accomplished the same end, and could be the substitute for it. They are the ground of hope and salvation. "Without the shedding of blood is no remission."

( 3.) Numerous passages scattered through the New Testament are also adduced in support of the penal theory. The great theme, "Christ gave His life a ransom for many," "Christ was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world," "Christ gave Himself an offering and sacrifice to God," "He that knew no sin was made to be sin in our behalf," "He redeemed us from the curse of the law," "He suffered for us," overwhelmed and took possession of the minds of the Apostles, and became the burden of their thoughts and the subject-matter of their writings. Yet it is remarkable that, with one exception, no clew can be found to a theory of the atonement.

Not a ray of light falls on the question whether the value of Christ's sufferings lie primarily in their influence upon the Divine Mind, or upon the universe at large. The minds of the Sacred writers were so absorbed in the ultimate effects of Christ's sufferings--the pardon and salvation of men--they seem to forget all about theories. "God gave His only-begotten Son," is their language, not to satisfy divine justice, or public justice, but "that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish." "He was manifested," not to placate the divine anger, but "to take away our sins." He gave Himself for us," not to satisfy God's sense of justice, but "that He might deliver us from this present evil world." He bear our sins "that we might be heirs unto righteousness." "Who Himself bear our sins, that we might live unto righteousness." It is difficult to find an intimation in the Bible that the sacrifice of Christ accomplished anything more, or other, than the atonement or covering of human sin, and the pardon of all who will believe. The theory that Christ accomplished this by suffering the penalty of the divine law and thus pacified the anger of God, satisfied His sense of justice, and made Him willing and able to pardon, is as foreign to the Bible as it is to every man's good sense. It is a mere metaphysical speculation, foisted upon the Word of God, and baptized with the name of theology.

(2.) The second argument, relied upon in support of the penal theory, is the assumption that sin, on account of its intrinsic demerits, deserves punishment; and that God is as imperatively bound to treat it as it is--in other words, to punish it up to its full deserts, as He is to be just. This is the demand of the eternal justice, which God can not disregard and be true to Himself. This, it is claimed, is not a proposition to be proved, but an intuition of the reason seen in its own light. Every sin, then, must be fully, adequately punished, either in the person of the sinner himself, or in that of some one who has been accepted as a substitute. So the eternal justice demands.

In this argument two propositions are laid down as axiomatic: (1.) Sin, for its own sake, deserves punishment. (2.) God is bound to punish it in every case up to its deserts.

The former we admit to be intuitive. Like the assertion; "every event has a cause," it is universal, absolute, unconditional. It stands alone, an independent revelation, which would be true were every other false. Still, it is a little more than a weak truism. Ill-desert and sin are synonyms, and

the assertion is little more than the assertion, ill-desert is ill-deserving; sin is sin.

The latter lacks every element of an intuitive truth. It is neither universal, absolute, nor unconditional. It is not universal: I am not under obligation to punish every sin up to its full deserts; my neighbor is not; no being is, unless it be God. So far from being universal, it is limited to a single Being. It is conditioned, too, (1.) upon the continued existence and supremacy of God. Were He to cease to be, or to transfer the administration of His government to another, the assertion would not be true. (2) Upon the continued existence of the transgressors. Were he to elude the grasp of God, or cease to be, there would be no obligation to punish him. The assertion is, then, not an intuitive truth; it is merely empirical, if a truth at all, depending as fully upon evidence as the assertion the earth is round.

But is the assertion, God is in justice bound to punish every sinner up to his full a deserts, a truth at all? It will certainly be difficult to prove it, in the face of the obvious fact He does not do it. Sentence against an evil deed deserves a speedy execution as fully as it deserves execution at all. In deferring punishment God, is not treating sinners just as they deserve. The atonement is itself a refutation of the assertion. If retributive justice requires anything, it is that the evil-doer shall himself be punished. It belongs to the very nature of punishment that it fall upon the transgressor. God, in providing a way of escape, is not treating him as he deserves. Probably it would be difficult to find a man who, in candid moments, will not admit that God is treating him better than he deserves. Nothing is more evident than that God, in the bestowment of good and ill, is influenced by prudential and governmental considerations. Even Dr. Charles Hodge says: "It is admitted that governmental reasons properly enter into the considerations which determine the nature and measurement of punishment."<sup>59</sup> There certainly can be no proof that obligation rests upon God to punish every sin, or any sin, up to its full desert.

Is the thousand-times reiterated assertion, that the design of Christ's sufferings and death was to satisfy divine justice, in any proper use of the word true? The word justice is used, I think, in but two senses: (1.) As a perception of the reason that every interest should be fairly treated, or as either identical with the law of right, or as one of its most obvious

applications. In this sense it is called rectoral justice. (2.) It is used also to designate the constitutional impulse, or demand that justice shall be meted out to the wicked. In this sense it is nearly identical with anger, or indignation, and is termed vindictive or retributive justice. It is the feeling aroused when a flagrant crime has been committed. This impulse is not sinful. It is a divinely implanted principle, like compassion, or thirst for knowledge, and when subjected to the control of reason, contributes immensely to human well being.

This vindictory principle, no one doubts, is one of the divine perfections. God hates sin infinitely, is angry with the wicked, and is the subject of a divine impulse to punish.

Is it in this latter sense the word justice is used by the advocates of the penal system? Was it to satisfy His sense of retributive justice God laid upon Christ the penalty of the divine law? We judge this to be their meaning from the innumerable assertions of the advocates of the penal theory; from the use of such words as expiation, satisfaction; from the use of the phrase "satisfying divine justice," as the equivalent of "appeasing the divine anger."

But it does not seem possible to adopt such a theory in full view of its meaning. Since the sufferings and death of Christ stand for the penalty of the divine law, the theory holds that God punishes sin to satisfy His feelings of anger and indignation. He dooms uncounted billions of His offspring to an immortality of despair, not for any good which will ever come to them, or to any other created being or thing, but simply only for the satisfaction it affords Him to see them suffer. To gratify this feeling He built hell, and will protract the sufferings of lost souls forever and ever, than which nothing worse was ever said of the Neros, the Caligulas, the Dukes of Alva, or any other whose name, his crimes and cruelties have immortalized. But it is only in other words repeating the assertion that the object of Christ's sufferings and death was the satisfaction of the divine retributive justice.

This theory, if we have correctly interpreted it, charges God with vassalage to impulse--precisely President Fairchild's definition of sin--with administering the government of the universe, not under the leadership of infinite reason, but under the control of impulse and passion. Subjection to this impulse of justice among men is called

revenge, and accounted one of the darkest expressions of depravity. Is that which in us is sin, in its essence and most revolting aspect, a divine perfection?

Then the mode by which, it is alleged, the divine justice is satisfied, carries a refutation of the whole theory. A flagrant crime has been perpetrated, and the community is aroused by a deep feeling of indignation: can any thing be more absurd than that of allaying it by punishing some innocent person?

A man is the victim of a flagrant crime: can any thing be more absurd than the proposition of allaying his indignation by inflicting vengeance upon some one who has done him no harm. Is this the means by which the divine anger against sinners has been satisfied. It has well been asked: "Is the alleged immorality of letting off the sinner, amended by the additional crime of penalty crushing the sinless?" What a travesty upon justice to represent it as satisfied by an act of injustice! There is one thing more absurd than even this. It is the attempt to appease one's indignation for a wrong received by inflicting upon himself another and an additional wrong. This reaches the climax of absurdity. Is not this what the penal theory represents God as having done?

The case of Zelucus has been a thousand times cited to illustrate and vindicate this theory. The son of this king had violated a law, the penalty of which was the loss of both eyes; and the father meets the sad emergency by removing one of his son's eyes and one of his own. This self-inflicted suffering of the father was vicarious, resembling in this respect that of Christ's, and was probably just as effective in securing the end of punishment as if inflicted on the transgressor, and proved a safe and valid ground, doubtless, for the partial remission. But no one for a moment doubts that the whole value, efficacy and design of that father's sufferings were governmental. He could not, unless insane, have submitted to the torture and loss to appease his own indignation, satisfy himself, or for any possible reason other than that of influencing the great public. The necessity of such a sacrifice evidently laid not in his own mind, but in the exigencies of the government. A very unfortunate illustration this for the penal theory, as it only illustrates its absurdity. Nothing can be more dishonorable to God than the assertion He punishes every sin, or any sin, to satisfy His retributive justice.

Does He punish sin to satisfy His rectoral justice? This question must mean, Does He do it to satisfy His sense of right, or it means nothing; for rectoral justice is nothing more than obedience to the great law of right. But right always means the right thing, or it means nothing. "Right," says President Mark Hopkins, "in its only intelligible sense, is the quality of an action." The word is always an adjective when correctly used. The phrase, "the eternal right" has no more meaning, than the eternal straight, or the eternal crooked, theca eternal big, or eternal little. But what is the right thing? Happily on this point there is, and can be, no difference of opinion. If there is an intuitive truth in morals--a truth moral beings are incapacitated to doubt--it is that the right thing is good, or, in the language of the great Edwards: "Well-being in general." We challenge any one to conceive of obligation to do any thing else or different. It is not possible; any other obligation is unthinkable. Tell a child to throw dust into the air, his irrepressible question is, "What for--what good will come of it?" He instinctively knows, as he knows that he exists, there can be obligation only to do good. This obligation is the moral law resting upon God, and upon all moral beings. The ultimate and only law, we are safe in saying, to which God owes fealty, or which God regards, is the highest well-being of His empire, including His own. It is the interests and claims of His universe which do, and will influence Him in His treatment of His creatures, in respect both of pardon and punishment. Love--the choice of the welfare of being--includes all divine moral perfection, and fulfills all moral law. This Moloch, then, we call justice, with iron hand, and adamant cup filled with blood, transfigures itself, when unmasked, into love. Justice, whether retributive or rectoral, is either an impulse under the control of love, or love itself.

If this position be true, and it seems to us impregnable, how groundless the thousand times repeated assertion, God punishes sinners simply and solely because they deserve punishment, irrespective of any good which may accrue therefrom! The assertion assumes there is something in this universe of more value than well-being--some obligation higher than benevolence, some law love does not fulfill. But this assertion is contradicted by the very breath that utters it in the declaration that the design of penalty is the satisfaction of divine justice. Is not satisfaction--the satisfaction of the Infinite Mind--a good? The good, then, which comes of punishment, not ill-desert, is admittedly the object for which it is inflicted. Ill-desert is a condition, but evidently not the final cause of

punishment. Its only possible justification, whether endured by Christ, or the sinner, is the good which comes from it. If it did no more good to punish a moral being than to punish trees or stones, no one could regard it obligatory. Then, according to the penal theory, the design of Christ's sufferings and death--the good which comes of them--is the satisfaction which God derives from seeing His creatures suffer. God's indignation toward sinners was such He was willing to sacrifice His Son to satisfy it. In other words, God so hated the world He gave His only-begotten Son.

The question is asked, Is punishment right because good comes of it, or does good come of it because it is right? It is right because good comes of it, we answer, and for no other conceivable reason. Would it be right, it is asked, to punish an innocent person for any good which might accrue? The thing, I answer, is impossible, for punishment implies guilt. If the question be, Is the infliction of suffering upon an innocent person justified by the good which comes of it? I unhesitatingly answer, yes, in millions of cases; otherwise, the atonement would not be justifiable. It is certainly right to require the mother to take care of her infant child, though it may cost her inconvenience and suffering. A captain of a ship, on the Atlantic, refused to give aid to another on fire, on account of the delay and loss to which it would subject him, and his remorse, on reflection, was such as to drive him to suicide. The conclusion is inevitable that the design of Christ's sufferings, which took the place of punishment, and the only thing accomplished by them, was the general welfare. It is this great consideration which alone determines God's treatment of sinners, and we fail to find any support for the penal theory, either in the Word of God, or in the intuitions of reason. Were this theory mere harmless speculation, we should not deem it of sufficient importance to antagonize. But it is not a harmless speculation; it is, we believe, a pernicious untruth, dishonorable to God and far-reaching in its power of evil.

1. It precludes the possibility of pardon under the divine administration. Sin must in every case be adequately punished--so says stern Justice. It is not a matter left optional with God. "It is not conceivable," says the logical Professor A. A. Hodge, "that God should in a single case fail to punish sin as a demerit." "Divine justice is an exalted attribute of divine perfection, determining God always to treat moral beings as they deserve." The tyrant Justice will not relinquish its iron grasp until it has wrung from the victim the last drop of agony his sin deserves. Nothing but

the full measure of suffering, either from the sinner or from some one taking the place of the sinner, will satisfy its demands. But a sin can not be both punished and forgiven. Pardon is acquittal, a remission of penalty. How can a penalty be both remitted and executed--a sin be punished and not punished? If every sin, according to the theory, is punished, none is forgiven. "The work of Christ," says Dr. Charles Hodge, "had an inherent worth which rendered it a perfect satisfaction, so that justice had no further claim. It is here as in the case of the state criminal; if such an offender suffers the penalty which the law prescribes as the punishment of the offense, he is no longer liable to condemnation; no further punishment can justly be demanded for the offense. . . . The creditor has no further claim, when the debt due him has been fully paid." If "Christ's suffering was a satisfaction, so that justice had no further claim", what remains to be remitted? If this theory be true, those for whom Christ has died need no pardon; the penalty of the law can not be remitted, for it has already been endured; and, as there is pardon for no other, it follows there can be no such thing as pardon under the divine administrations. No view could more directly contradict the word of God, and the whole system of Christianity. "He is a God showing mercy unto thousands, forgiving iniquities, transgressions and sins." It was mercy in God, it is said, to accept the proffered substitute in lieu of the sinner's punishment. It might have been mercy, it certainly was not pardon.

2. The penal theory leaves no place for mercy. Mercy may be a divine attribute; but if this theory be correct, it has never, and can never in any case be exercised. Mercy is favor to the undeserving, and can be shown only to this class. It is treating men better than they deserve. But God, according to this theory, is bound, by the awful mandates of justice, to treat every one just as he deserves. The full cup of his iniquities is put to the sinner's lips, and it must be drunk to its dregs, either by him or by some one taking his place. The full measure of suffering, without diminution or mitigation, must be endured. Repentance, tears of penitence falling in rivers, avail nothing, the uttermost farthing must be paid. So says stern Justice. Some theological wag has said: "God exists in a quaternity--the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, and Justice;" and, he might have added, the greatest of these is Justice. This is the teaching of the penal theory of the atonement, but not of the Sacred Scriptures. They teach that "He is full of compassion;" that "He knoweth our frame and remembereth we are but dust;" that "His mercy endureth forever," and

that He gives it boundless expression wherever He can without imperiling higher interests. But it is said the death of Christ for sinners is the highest expression of mercy ever given, probably in any world. True, but hardly of God's mercy. He has received the full quota of suffering His justice required. He has yielded nothing. It is even doubtful, if this theory be true, whether the redemption of Christ has saved any suffering to the universe.

3. It is not perfectly apparent, if this theory be true, how we are saved by grace. If Christ has suffered the full penalty of my sins, fully liquidated the debt, if in addition, His obedience has been so credited over to me as to make me legally innocent, I am, for ought I see, on the same footing with angels who have never sinned, and entitled to the same immunities in the great household of God. Though under infinite obligation to Him who paid the debt, I have a right to claim pardon, whatever my character, and exemption from all the liabilities sin has incurred. This was the view of the elder Edwards, at least, in his earlier years. "The justice of God," he says, "that required man's damnation, and seemed inconsistent with his salvation, now does as much require the salvation of those that believe in Christ as before it required their damnation. Salvation is an absolute debt to the believer from God, so that he may in justice demand and challenge it, not on account of what he himself has done, but on account of what Christ his surety, has done; for Christ has satisfied justice fully for his sin, so that it is but a thing that may be challenged, that God should now release the believer from the punishment. It is but a piece of justice that the creditor should release the debtor, when he has fully paid the debt. And again, the believer may demand eternal life because it has been merited by Christ; so it is contrived that that justice, which seemed to require man's destruction, now demands his salvation."<sup>60</sup>

4. But a far more damaging objection to the penal theory lies in that it necessitates either a limited atonement or universal salvation. Evidently no sinner can be lost whose sins have been expiated by the death of Christ. It is not conceivable that in a just government the same offense shall be twice adequately punished, or a debt exacted, which has been already paid. If the penal view be true, every man for whom Christ has tasted death will be saved. Salvation must be commensurate with the atonement.

The force of this objection has long been acknowledged by the advocates of the penal theory, and no effort has been spared to evade it. The most

popular has been the assertion, "Christ died sufficiently for all, efficiently for only the elect." If the sufferings of Christ were sufficient to pay the debt of all, why demand more? Why exact what has been already sufficiently paid?

The Westminster divines, and probably a majority of Calvinists, unable to accept the doctrine of universal salvation, and unwilling to take refuge in unmeaning subtleties, have boldly accepted the doctrine of limited atonement. "Wherefore," says the Westminster Confessor, "they that are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ. . . . Neither are any others redeemed by Christ, spiritually called justified, adopted, sanctified and saved but the elect only."<sup>61</sup> "To all for whom Christ hath purchased redemption He doth certainly and effectually apply the same."<sup>62</sup> Calvin in his Commentaries on 1 John, 2:2: "He is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world," says the phrase, "the whole world can not include the reprobate; such a monstrous thing deserves no refutation; but designates those who should believe in Christ, who were then scattered throughout the various parts of the world."

This doctrine strikes me as not only antagonizing the clearest statements of the Divine Word, but as bordering, to say the least, on essential error. If the purchase of Christ is limited to the elect, how do I know I am included? How can I exercise faith in an atonement I have no evidence was made for me? What right have I to call Christ my Saviour, and trust in Him for pardon? Reliance upon an uncertainty is presumption, not faith. Such questions sometimes, in the last hours of life, loom up into terrible significance. Not far from my former residence, in the State of Pennsylvania, there was a Scotch Presbyterian church, whose members had long been schooled in these views of the atonement. I am credibly informed that many of its old members have died in despair. Their creed had taken away their Christ, and in the great hour of dying, they had no assurance that any provision had been made for them. It is not easy to conceive a doctrine which more effectually destroys the foundations of faith, or puts a more insuperable barrier between the soul and its Saviour. It is sufficient to say that either limited atonement or universal salvation is a logical necessity of the penal theory.

5. Perhaps an equally damaging objection to this theory is the undue relative prominence it gives the sterner attributes of the divine character.

God is a judge as well as Father. He is a jealous God, and will finally put all enemies under His feet. He will punish the incorrigible, how long, and how severely, only a correct interpretation of the Scriptures can reveal. This, however, is but a small segment of the truth, and it is possible to give it such prominence as virtually to convert it into error. That this is done by the penal theory of the atonement, and that multitudes in consequence have been brought under the influence of servile fear, and learned to hate God, I can not doubt. I believe a large amount of what has piously been termed "the opposition of unregenerate hearts to truth," is the opposition of sound intellects to error. The Bible teaches God is angry with the wicked, yet brings to the front the fact that "His tender mercies are over all His works," and that "His mercy endureth forever." God regards suffering as an evil in itself--an evil to be inflicted only when demanded by the public welfare; and He never expresses a groan from the prisoner, or a tear from the lost and the sinning, which fidelity to His infinite trusts could dispense with.

There is an impression somewhat prevalent, that there is such a thing as abstract right, and that the idea is more ultimate than that of the highest good; that there is a law higher than the law of love; that though God may be bound to promote the highest good, yet it must be done in subordination to the higher claims of right and justice. A moment's consideration will satisfy any one that this abstract right is identical with obligation. But obligation has no meaning unless it be obligation to do something, and there is certainly nothing to be done of higher value and more importance than the welfare of being. Then the import of the objection is, obligation to promote the welfare of being, must be subordinated to obligation. Or obligation must be subordinated to itself. Right is simply a right choice, and choosing right as an ultimate thing is simply choosing a choice. Choosing right is choosing the right thing, or the language has no meaning, and that right thing is good--nothing else. Punishing ill-desert simply because it is ill-desert, rather than for the good which comes of it, is acting without any end. It is not rational or responsible conduct.

IV. The fourth theory of the atonement, usually termed the governmental, I have already indicated. It holds that the sufferings and death of Christ are strictly vicarious; that they take the place, and are in lieu of the sinner's sufferings, and are accepted as a substitute for the penalty of the

divine law, because they are equally influential in sustaining the dignity of the government, meeting the exigency sin has created, and subserving all the ends for which punishment is inflicted,--thus rendering God just in justifying him that believeth in Jesus.

It holds that the final cause of punishment, the end and only end which justifies its infliction, is the general good, including that of God and His empire, and that the sufferings and death of Christ as fully subserve this end as would the execution of the law; therefore, in certain cases, the execution of the law may be remitted and sin may be pardoned.

It is objected that even if this theory be true, the necessity and final cause of the atonement must lie in the Divine Mind. God is infinite; all other beings and interests are but finite--a drop to the ocean. "Of Him and through Him and unto Him were all things created." "Christ gave Himself an offering and sacrifice unto God." Every act, whether eating or drinking, must be performed for His glory; this is the law of the universe. This is so; but the interests of God and those of His empire are identical. Whatsoever is done unto the least of His people, is done unto Him. God places an infinite estimate upon the welfare of His children, and I am permeated with the conviction that He gave His only-begotten Son because He so loved the world, whether able to explain the fact or not.

Grotius, one of the ablest advocates of the governmental theory, thinks putting the ground of the atonement in the Divine Mind is subversive of the doctrine. "God," he says, "must be regarded, not as an offended party, nor as a creditor, nor as a master, but as a moral governor. A creditor can remit the debt due him at pleasure, a master can punish or not punish as he sees fit; but a ruler must act, not according to his feelings or caprice, but with a view to the best interests of those under His authority."<sup>63</sup> If God had exclusive regard to Himself in giving His Son, what meaning was there in the gift, or what necessity for the sacrifice?

Whatever influence the atonement may have exerted on the Divine Mind, the benefits which have accrued and are accruing to the universe of intelligent beings, must be inconceivable. Its revelations of God, and of His willingness to suffer, of His disapprobation of sin, of the connection between sin and suffering, have awakened thought and emotion, thanksgiving and song, and must forever and ever, beyond any finite power to compute.

We do not deny that the gratification of retributive justice may possibly constitute part of the good coming from penalty. This is a possible inference from Rev. 6:9; but we do not believe the sufferings of Christ are to the slightest extent related to such feelings.

The governmental theory holds that God delights in mercy, and will pardon wherever higher interests will permit. A few years ago, the large workshop, crowded with combustible materials, of one of our State<sup>64</sup> prisons took fire. The alarm-bell was sounded, the prisoners were dismissed from their labors, and with hundreds of citizens (the writer was one of the number ) who crowded within the walls, engaged in saving other valuable buildings connected with the institution. The heat from the burning pile was becoming intense, when it occurred to one man,--to apparently but one, and he a life-convict for murder,--that the great steam boiler must soon burst. At the peril of his life, he rushed into the flames, turned off the escape valve, and returned alive, but badly bruised and burned. He had saved the lives of hundreds, and had prevented a more terrible calamity than the history of that State records. A dispatch containing the facts, and recommending pardon, was forwarded to the Governor, and soon a dispatch came flashing back over the wires bearing his pardon; and that man, that night, after seven years of confinement, went forth glad in the possession of freedom.

That act of pardon, without some equivalent, would have aroused general indignation, but, in the circumstances, was regarded highly proper and commendable. It gave no encouragement to the criminally disposed, contained no suggestion of impunity, carried no affront to the majesty of the law. The heroic act accomplished every thing his continued incarceration could have accomplished. It was an atonement--a covering of the offence.

The Governor regarding suffering as an evil in itself, and believing it could in this case, with perfect safety to the State, be dispensed with, yielded to the dictates of benevolence, gave the man his freedom, and the great public justified the act.

What the sacrifice of that man accomplished in the commonwealth of Wisconsin, the sacrifice of Christ has accomplished in the greater commonwealth of the Universe. That heroic deed did not save the man; it simply rendered his salvation possible; and this, I understand, is all the

sufferings of Christ have accomplished. They have so met the exigencies of the case, sin can be forgiven without imperiling any interest.

But we have not yet reached a satisfactory answer of the question with which this paper commences. How did the sufferings and death of Christ effect this? Wherein lies that efficacy which avails to render sin pardonable? The answer of the penal theory, to wit: that Christ's sufferings were not a substitute for penalty, but the penalty itself; and there is, therefore, neither need nor justice in inflicting upon the sinner what has been already endured, is eminently unsatisfactory, because eminently untrue. Christ's sufferings were not penalty. They lack every element of penalty. They were not punishments--the idea of punishing God is horrible--they were something which took the place of punishment.

It may aid us in answering this question, to ask wherein lies the efficacy of penalty to effect the end for which it is inflicted? But one answer is possible. It lies in its didactic outflowings. Penalty is a great teacher, or it is nothing. As penalty and atonement were designed to accomplish the same thing, so that one stands as a substitute for the other, may we not assume they accomplish it in the same way? "Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, . . . are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire." "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, . . . having made them an example unto those who should live ungodly." Of what possible use could have been the punishment of those corrupt cities other than the example it holds up before the ages of the danger of sin? It is to-day, and has been for near four thousand years, among the great teachers of the world; and its moral influence has been, beyond measure, valuable. If the immortality of future punishment has any different use, I am unable to conceive what it is. Does not the efficacy of Christ's sufferings and death lie just here? Is it not the moral teachings which have gone out from Gethsemane and Calvary, which makes it safe to pardon sin? So I have long believed. I do not see how they can take the place of penalty, unless they do the same thing.

In the incarnation, God came within the orbit of finite vision, and revealed moral perfections which otherwise must have remained forever unknown. The intelligent universe must have been overwhelmed with awe and amazement to learn that God, while infinite in wisdom and power, is

meek and lowly in heart, willing to suffer and serve, and ready, for the lowliest of His offspring, to make infinite sacrifice. It is the moral influence gone out, and going out, of this revelation which renders God just in justifying believing men. So, I think, the Apostle teaches, Rom. 3:25-26--the only passage in Sacred Writ which gives us a distinct theory of the atonement: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sin; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Here is a repeated assertion that the declaration or revelation of the righteousness of God makes Him just in pardoning the believer. In other words, the exhibition Christ has made of God has created such boundless confidence in Him--in His love and regard for the welfare of His creatures--He can exercise the pardoning power, and no being will ever challenge the wisdom of the act. "By his knowledge," says the prophet--by what he knows and reveals of God--"shall my righteous servant justify many." It is to the reason and intelligence of moral beings, the sufferings and death of Christ address themselves. It is through the truth Christ's moral conquests have been, and will be, achieved. "For this end," He says, "was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth." Can we doubt that His greatest victory was won through this instrumentality?

We have in our late war, as I have said in another connection, a striking illustration of the influence of a great revelation in justifying the remission of penalty. To have pardoned the assailants of Sumter, previous to the war, would have laid our government justly open to the charge of pusillanimity and cowardice, and disgraced it before the civilized world. It would have destroyed all respect for itself, and rendered treason popular; but the sacrifice of three hundred thousand lives, and four billions of treasure to maintain its honor and integrity has created an impression, wide as the world, that the Great Republic is a power not safely trifled with. The sacrifice on a vaster scale accomplished precisely the thing their execution would have effected, and the former could safely be accepted as a substitute for the latter. There was no need of the further shedding of blood to vindicate the majesty of the government. It was a great atonement, and the government forgave those men, and no one has ever suspected it of wanting the courage and ability to protect itself. Can we doubt it is the moral influence of a greater revelation which enables God, without injustice to any interest, to justify the believer?

"Pain and distress," says Dr. West, "have no moral virtue in themselves, and are of no importance in themselves, other than as means through which the beauty of the Divine Character, and the true disposition of the Divine Mind, may be seen by His creatures. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the sufferings of sinners in no other way than as they serve to exhibit the righteous character of God, and prove Him to be the hater of iniquity."<sup>65</sup> The thing of greatest price, without which the existence of moral beings is an evil, is confidence in God. This gone the centripetal forces of the moral world are wanting, and lawlessness and moral chaos are everywhere. The problem before the Eternal Mind was the pardon of sin, without impairing the confidence of moral beings in the great King; and the solution was found in the revelations of the incarnation.

1. It is objected that this theory makes the atonement a "mere method of instruction," puts its necessity in the ignorance of moral beings, and assumes that any other method, equally efficacious in overcoming this ignorance would be an adequate ground of pardon. What else, I ask, can the atonement be but "a method of instruction?" What possible virtue can there be in mere suffering other than the revelations which go out from it? But, can we conceive of any other method of so impressively conveying to the universe the truths involved in the incarnation than the one which was adopted?

The mother may logically demonstrate her love for her children in a hundred ways, yet nothing stirs their deep emotions like actual suffering in their behalf; and nothing else conveys such infinite lessons to moral beings as seeing

"One hanging on a tree,  
In agony and blood."

This wondrous event has infinitely exalted God in the esteem and affections of moral beings. It has opened a new and infinite volume, and created such confidence in Him, He can pardon or refuse to pardon, according to His infinite discretion, and not a dissonant note mingle with the anthem, "Just and righteous are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints."

2. Who was the real sufferer in the garden and on the cross? The penal theory (1) makes Him other than God, that he may offer something to God. (2) It makes Him God, that He may be able to offer that which is acceptable. (3) It makes Him man that the divine may not suffer. Yet, I

believe, the advocates of this theory are a unit in the view that only the human suffered, and that the suffering, for a few hours of a mere man, was the equivalent of all human desert.

The governmental theory holds, I think, that the Divine was the real actor and real sufferer in the great drama. It is hardly possible that the finite and human could personate and present God to the universe, or that suffering by proxy could exhibit the real heart and love of God. To say the least, this view robs the garden and the cross of divine significance, and detracts infinitely from the influence of Gethsemane and Calvary.

3. It is further objected that the atonement, if the governmental theory be true, secures the pardon of no one, but only renders pardon possible, by removing the obstacles out of the way. This is admitted as an inference, but not as an objection. Indeed, we glory in the impartiality of the atonement of Christ. It makes the offer of salvation boundless and free, and leaves no obstacle in the way of any poor, despairing sinner. God may do more for one than another, but that He does all He consistently can for every child of Adam's race is the glory of the Gospel of Christ.

## VII. THE FUTURE OF INCORRIGIBLE MEN

"WHAT lies in reserve for men who die unpardoned?" A question of more awful significance, and of profounder interest, can hardly be suggested. He who can approach it with levity, or in a spirit other than that of deep solemnity and of profound loyalty to truth, is unworthy the place of teacher.

The question is eminently one of interpretation, upon which the unaided human understanding throws but faint light--one in reference to which reliance upon mere speculation is especially unsafe. The Sacred Oracles are the only reliable source of inquiry, and a child-like surrender to its teachings the only proper spirit of the inquirer. Still facts and principles drawn partially from other sources may throw light on the great problem.

1. A basal fact in this discussion is, God is supremely benevolent. This means His supreme purpose in all He does is to promote the highest welfare of His domain, to exclude, so far as is practicable, sin and suffering, and crowd it as full of blessedness as His resources permit. Obligation to do this rests upon God, and upon all other moral beings, each in his particular sphere, and no other obligation is possible. It is the love which fulfills law. This fact has an infinite bearing on the question under review. We may rest in the assurance that, so far from treating the incorrigible with injustice, or unnecessary severity, God will do all the interests of His kingdom allow to relieve their sufferings. The idea that on the Judgment throne He is less compassionate than when He wept over Jerusalem in the temple, or fed the fainting multitudes in the desert, has no countenance in the Word of God. If He protracts the sufferings of the wicked forever, or adds to the burden of a single lost spirit, He does it not willingly, but because it would be a betrayal of the infinite trusts He administers to do otherwise.

He never punishes men simply because they deserve punishment. Ill-desert is doubtless the essential condition of punishment, without which there can be no punishment, but not a sufficient reason for it, and can not be its final course. Only good in some form can be the ultimate object of any rational action.

Ill-desert once incurred cleaves to the soul during its existence. The sinner is just as ill-deserving after as before pardon, and will be while the ages are passing. If ill-desert, then, be a sufficient reason for punishing at all, it will be for punishing while the soul exists. In other words, punishment must be inflicted while the reason and necessity of it continue; and, if these lie wholly in ill-desert, it must continue while ill-desert continues, and there can be no remission. Evidently, only the demands of the general good justify punishment. For this reason penalty may be remitted when the general good can be equally subserved in some other way, and only for this reason is an atonement possible.

2. Another fact of equal bearing on this discussion is, man is a free agent. In any circumstances, under any pressure, human or divine, in which he can choose at all, he can choose in either of two directions--in that of the strongest motive, or the opposite. This ability is essential to freedom. Without it, the word choice has no meaning. Any influence, then, which overcomes this power of contrary choice, or exceeds the agent's ability to resist, destroys both freedom and responsibility. Hence God, in dealing with men, is limited to an amount of influence they can resist, and while they are free they can sin, and God, in the very structure of the soul, has put it beyond His power to prevent. This is sufficiently evident in the fact that men here, though in the incipency of their being, set His counsels at defiance, and persist in sin in the face of all His efforts and entreaties. Why is not this true in the eternal world, and the real solution of the great problem of future punishment? Why may not men sin there for the same reason they sin here, and God permit it there for the same reason He permits it here?

3. There is an inseparable connection between sin and suffering. It comes of no arbitrary arrangement, but from the structure of the soul and the nature of things. The reason reveals the divine law and imposes obligation to obey it. Obedience satisfies its claims, and brings to the soul the peace of God; disobedience overwhelms the soul with self-reproach, which, gradually deepening into remorse, is of all other suffering the most to be dreaded. When the soul "laughs at itself," its agony is perfect. This law belongs to man's deepest nature; it is a part of himself, and when he violates it he "wrongeth his own soul." "The way of the transgressor is hard," and this universe must be reconstructed to make it otherwise. While men sin they suffer. Were there no God, it would be so. It is then by

no arbitrary decree, by no sovereign act, wicked men when they die are consigned to a place of suffering. To them hell is everywhere, and there is no escape.

4. Another fact is God's sacred regard for natural law. How rarely, if ever, He sets it aside! Infinite good comes of its workings; yet how apparently heartless and remorselessly cruel it is! How often the innocent child writhes in the slow fire, and the sun continues to shine serenely, and all is silent as though there were no all-seeing God to witness the suffering! How reluctantly, if at all, He interferes with human freedom! How our hearts sicken and break over the shame and crime, the agony and ruin God allows! What a hell men can kindle here, and God permits it! Great lessons are taught, great moral ends are secured, doubtless; and there is an overruling providence wonderfully educating good from evil. Suffering is an evil which the divine eye fails not to see, and the divine heart fails not to feel, yet evidently interference with natural law must be, in the divine estimation, a greater evil, therefore it is largely allowed to take its own course and work out its results.

How will it be in the World of Spirits, is a very suggestive question. Will the lost soul be measurably protected by the interventions, overrulings, and sheltering providence of God, or, like him who built his house upon the sand, stand exposed to the full force of the storm? Hell, whatever its significance or location, is, we know, the product of an infinite regard for the general welfare. As the asylum is the most desirable place for the diseased, and the darkened room for one whose eyes can not endure the piercing light, so hell may be the most desirable place in the universe for the diseased soul. It may have been built in the interests of compassion. We do not know. We can not tell what sources of mitigation and relief may have been provided. We can not exclude all hope. Still, God's regard for natural law contains an awful prophecy and wakens fearful forebodings. What if God shall abandon a lost spirit to itself, and allow sin unrestrained to work out its natural results! Ten years of sin, even in this world, can convert the sweet and innocent child into a demon. If allowed free course, what can it do in the next? Were I a lost spirit I would vote, it seems to me, for the supremacy of God.

5. Will all or any who die sinners remain such during their existence? Not necessarily, we answer. There is not, we are sure, a saint or angel in heaven so confirmed in holiness he can not at any moment abjure his

allegiance and join the rebellion. We are pretty well assured such changes have occurred, and perhaps the awful results are among the influences which make it certain they will never be repeated. Possibly the creation of such restraining influences is the final cause of the immortality of these fallen spirits. As the moral element attaches only to voluntary acts and states, the moment a glorified saint loses his ability to do wrong, he loses his ability to do right. Holiness, beyond the possibility of sin, is a self-contradiction.

The same is true of any lost spirit. So long as he remains a sinner he must be able to stop sinning. The hour he loses this ability he ceases to be a sinner, for the sufficient reason that which is unavoidable is not sin. Says Prof. A. A. Hodge: "Like conscience, free agency is an essential and indestructible element of human nature, and in every case is essential to moral accountability. Even devils and lost souls are as free in their sins as saints in their holiness."<sup>66</sup>

The question is not one of ability, but of fact. Will all, or any who die unpardoned, sooner or later, change their relations to God? What are the antecedent probabilities?

1. On the one hand lies the vast increment of knowledge, which must come to the soul on entering the Spirit world, the increased clearness in which it will see the folly of contending with God, and the infinite advantages of being at peace with Him. How much, now hazy, doubtful and indistinct will then have deepened into clearness and reality! Oh, won't the weary, suffering spirit consent, by-and-by, to fall into the great trend of things, and become the friend of God?

On the other, is the rooted selfishness, the growing stubbornness, and the absolute infatuation of wicked men, which even divine influences have failed to overcome. Will these gracious influences be exerted there? Will the offer of pardon be made? Will the Holy Spirit, with solemn pressure, urge upon them the duty and privilege of becoming the Sons of God? Do the exceedingly great and precious promises reach that far-away clime? If not, how much hope can we cherish for the recovery of lost men?

This world is the preparatory department of the world to come. It is the training-school to prepare souls for heaven. It takes the moral agent, in the incipency of his being, while his affections are tender, his will flexible,

and the currents of his moral life like the little streamlet at its source, may be easily directed, for the purpose of preparing him for the wider fields before him. We can not understand why, otherwise, he is detained in this vestibule of the great temple of existence. How wonderfully adapted this world is to secure this end!

1. It is an isolated world, swinging in its silent orbit, far away from those scenes and influences which overpower the soul with hope and fear, and unfit it for calm reflection, and for the rational choice of God's service.

2. God is revealed here in the form and lowliness of a servant, as an elder brother, compassionate, sympathizing, suffering and accessible. How will he be revealed there? Perhaps, as an offended judge. Perhaps, in his own unveiled effulgence, from which the earth and the heavens will flee away.

3. What changes could make this world more conducive to the exercise of penitence and faith? Were its skies brighter, its flowers and music sweeter, had it no funerals, fewer sorrows and cares, would not men better love the world and the things in the world, and more reluctantly lay them at the feet of Christ?

On the other hand, were there more burdens, anguish, and tolling bells, would there not be more complaining and sullen opposition to God? It is not perpetual sunshine, nor constant storm which makes our fields fruitful; it is the wise alternation of the two. So, in the moral world, men need the marriage feast and the funeral hours--the alternations of joy and sorrow, just what this world affords. Even the crimes and the tears, the anguish and suffering--"woman's wail and man's despair"--are not unfavorable; for every cry of the orphan, every tear of the widow, and every groan of the prisoner is an appeal to our compassion--a voice calling us into the service of God and our race.

4. But there are here temptations, snares, and untoward influences. There are also myriads of good influences intrinsically stronger. Truth is mightier than falsehood. But who knows what may be there? Who can tell what winds may blow, what tides may beat over that undiscovered sea? Here pardon is offered, peace is found; there, to say the least, all is uncertainty.

Repentance, should such a thing occur in the future life, would doubtless

remove from the soul its self-condemnation--a fearful burden--and bring it into harmony with the divine government; but would it secure the favor of God, and remove what are usually termed governmental inflictions? Of this we have no proof. Human governments feel no obligation to pardon the penitent malefactor. Repentance would remove from his soul its deepest pain, but none of the governmental disabilities consequent upon his offense. Would repentance in the unseen world do more?

I can see nothing in the Atonement of Christ necessarily limiting its benefits to this life; but I find no proof in the Word of God it will be of any avail to a lost soul in the life to come.

A good deal of prejudice against what is termed the orthodox doctrine of Future Punishment has grown out of misconception of what it is.

1. It is charged with teaching that God attaches an infinite penalty to a finite sin; that He punishes a few months--a few years at most of sinning with sufferings which have no end. I do not so understand the doctrine. I find in the Bible no proof that He punishes a sinner one moment longer than he willfully, needlessly sins.

But the doctrine teaches, it is said, that a momentary sin is punished forever. This I am compelled to deny. Sin, it is conceded by all intelligent men, is not an isolated act or volition, but a choice or state of will, of which the wrong act is but the out-cropping; that sin is just as continuous as the choice of which it is the expression. He who ten years ago refused to pay an honest debt, and has not repented, is still refusing and perpetuating the sin. If Adam has not repented of the choice which found expression in eating the forbidden fruit, it still remains and still incurs the same amount of ill-desert it did at the moment of its inception. The Saviour calls the blasphemy of the Pharisees an "eternal sin," for the reason it was a sin which would never be forgiven. We may suffer some of the consequences of our sins after they are repented of. As the tender plant, early touched by the frost, never fully recovers, so we may never fully recover our loss, or be just what we would have been had we escaped the blight. Still there is no evidence we shall suffer what properly may be called punishment for any sin after it is repented of. Certainly no one can complain if sin is punished only during the period of its continuance, and the sinner punished only while he sins, and this is all we have any assurance of.

2. Another misconception is that the design--the final cause--of the future life is reward or punishment for the deeds done in this. Such a view finds support in neither reason nor revelation. Life is but "a vapor that appeareth for a little time," but the vestibule; the entrance-way into being. Is the endless life to come but its supplement and adjunct? Is it here we do, or fail to do, the work for which we were created, and there we simply reap the fruit of faithfulness or unfaithfulness? Is the existence of the child forever and ever prolonged simply that he may be punished for a few weeks spent in sin, or the existence of the thief that he may be rewarded for one act of faith put forth in the last throes of life? The idea is preposterous. The future world is evidently our home, the place where the work of existence will be performed, and the end of existence accomplished. As the ship is built on one element for service on another, so man is put up here for use hereafter. Not to sing psalms, and enjoy themselves, or receive the reward of their earthly work, do the redeemed tread the heavenly fields, but to be "kings and priests unto God, and serve Him day and night in his temple." Whether we will accept this service forever, we are here a few solemn days to decide. We are on trial, a few things are committed to us; will it do, is the problem, by and by to entrust us with many things, or must even that which we have been taken away? We were created to subserve the welfare of God's kingdom. Will we do it willingly in the palace of the universe, or unwillingly in its prison? is the question we are here to settle.

The idea that the final cause of future existence is retribution finds no countenance either in reason or in the Word of God.

3. Another misapprehension akin to this is that the sinner's sufferings in the future life will be graduated by the guilt he incurs in this. This prevalent idea leaves out of view the guilt he incurs in that life, and can not, I think, be true. The sufferings of men in this world, as a rule, increase in the ratio of their depravity. A hardened criminal remarked that his first stealing, when a child, of a pin, caused more compunction of conscience than his last murder. The pang produced by a great crime made but small impression on that hardened man, for the same reason the addition of a little rill makes but an imperceptible impression on the great sea. In that soul there was a deep of suffering immeasurable, which had been growing as his depravity increased. What a gulf between his state of mind and that of the comparatively innocent child! Ask such a

man if he is happy, and he looks wildly around in the fruitless effort to grasp the meaning of the word. His poor gratifications, for which he has battered everything valuable, are only the relief of a momentary forgetfulness. The deeper his guilt the deeper his sufferings is the law in this world; will it not be in the next?

Doubtless the more wicked a man when he leaves this world, the more wretched will he find himself as he awakens in the next, and his suffering must increase with his growth in sin. Then if this growth among lost spirits is unequal, their sufferings must be correspondingly unequal. In other words, wretchedness in the future life depends not wholly upon degree of guilt incurred here, but largely upon conduct there. The generous and moral here--the Antonines, if they fail of heaven--may have a less tolerable future than the Caligulas and the Neroes. It is objected that "that servant who knew his Lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few." This is true in this world, and my thought is it will be equally true in the next.

But our knowledge of the future world is exceedingly limited. God's compassions are deeper than the oceans. Who knows He may not interfere with natural laws and save lost men from the full consequences of their sins? It is possible in His infinite love He may measurably dull the stings of conscience, torpify the sensibility, or put the soul upon a process of decay. We shudder at the thought of a soul left to itself, and to the power of sin. We may have little ground for hope; but hope "springs eternal," and we will hope the future of incorrigible men is not as dark as the nature of things seem to prophesy. Were I resolved upon a course "of eternal sin," I would infinitely sooner trust myself in a universe with, than in one without God. I would sooner trust myself with the God of the Bible than with the God of nature, if we may suppose a distinction between the two.

4. Of all errors into which men fall, the gravest relates to the sinfulness of sin. Its enormity is doubtless lessened by the ignorance, thoughtlessness, and cloudy atmosphere in which men live; yet to one who will reflect, there is something appalling in the idea of disobeying God. It is not a constructive indignation He feels. It is not a quasi assumed anger growing out of conduct He has ordained. It is genuine, real, fathomless grief and indignation. What expression of disapprobation

He may see it necessary to make, we do not certainly know. He can not treat sin with indifference. Unless we view the whole subject from the standpoint of the sinfulness of sin, our ideas will be radically defective. The impression sin is a trifle, is a basal untruth, perverting every fact relating to the subject.

5. Another misconception exceedingly prevalent relates to the distinction between good and bad men. They differ, in the common estimation, in degree only. No man, it is said, is perfectly good, and no one is perfectly bad; and to assign one to eternal reward and the other to eternal punishment, because one stands higher than the other in the scale of moral character, is unjust; the difference in men's destinies, as taught in the Orthodox creed, is not warranted by the difference in their characters; and if the Bible seems to teach that there is a line arbitrarily drawn, and all who rise above it are taken to heaven, and all who, through adverse influences, fall below it are turned into hell, it is either misinterpreted, or it is not a revelation from God. I am happy in saying there is no such teaching in the Word of God. From beginning to end it makes the candidates for the two worlds differ not in degree, but by contrast--differ as the contrite and penitent convict who has sought and obtained pardon, differs from the one who evinces a defiant and sullen purpose to persist in crime, and is too proud to sue for forgiveness; or, as the soldier who has fought and bled and is willing to die for his country, differs from the one who is struggling for its defeat and overthrow. The discrimination which assigns one to freedom and the other to the dungeon--rewards one with laurels, the other with shame, is certainly neither partial nor unjust.

What can God do with incorrigible, self-destroying men?

1. Make them holy, it is said. The idea is a self-contradiction. Compulsory holiness is not holiness.

2. Give them another probation? What can be the meaning of another probation for beings in full possession of plenary ability, at any time, to repent and come into harmony with God? Probation in an important sense reaches over the sinner's future, and is conterminous with his existence, as ability to sin implies ability to repent. It must imply the offer of pardon after death and the employment of means to secure its acceptance.

It is held rather as a logical inference than a revealed truth, that those to

whom the Historic Christ has not been clearly revealed, and who consequently have not rejected Him in this life, will have the opportunity either to accept or reject Him in the life to come. This view is based on the obvious fact that it is unjust to condemn men for rejecting a Christ of whom they have never heard. Four objections to it readily suggest themselves.

(1.) The impossibility of drawing a line of demarcation between the rejectors and non-rejectors of the Historic Christ broad enough to warrant the discrimination the theory assumes, or any line at all. The fevered Tartar who never heard of the Bible has not rejected the Historic Christ; has the saloon-keeper, doing business within a block of the Plymouth church, Brooklyn, who never heard the name of Henry Ward Beecher? or the man who regards Confucius a more truly inspired teacher than the Christ of Nazareth? or the multitudes whose views of Christ are vague and indistinct, though they may have heard His name a thousand times? How often must one hear of Christ, and how clearly must He be apprehended as God incarnate to make non-acceptance rejection within the meaning of the theory? There is, at least to human view, no clearly defined distinction between those who have and those who have not rejected the Historic Christ, and there is every reason to believe if one lost sinner has a Saviour offered him after death, all will.

(2.) In all charity we must include almost the entire heathen world, and the great masses of men and women in Christian and nominally Christian lands among those who have never clearly apprehended the incarnate Christ, and as such have never rejected Him; hence this theory transfers the scene of trial to the future world, making not this, but that, the world of probation.

(3.) The essential Christ is given in the reason, He is "the true light which lighteth every man;" also, "the invisible things of him, since the foundation of the world, are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse, because that, knowing him, they glorified him not as God." The additional knowledge of the Bible and of the Historic Christ is of incalculable advantage, still, as taught by the Apostle, it is not essential to a just accountability. Reason and nature so distinctly voice the real Christ, the divine law, and the obligations of obedience, as to leave the heathen world without excuse, many of whom, no doubt, are resisting

clearer light, a profounder sense of duty, more solemn pressure of conscience and of the spirit of God, than multitudes to whom the Historic Christ has been preached. If justice claims another probation for heathen, I see no reason it should not for all who die unforgiven, for all such are equally the rejecters of Christ.

(4.) The fatal objection to this theory is, it lacks Scriptural support. It is, it seems to me, a mere conjecture, the outgrowth perhaps of an exaggerated conception of the relative importance of the Historical compared with the essential Christ. I fail to find in the Sacred Word any valid ground for the hope that pardon will be offered incorrigible men after death.

3. It is suggested that all for whose recovery from sin there is absolutely no hope may be annihilated, and to such a consummation many are looking as the final solution of the great problem.

The consideration which control the Divine Mind in all He does--the general good--must be decisive here. Would any penalty less than the immortality of suffering be an adequate expression of God's disapprobation of sin, or satisfy moral beings that all has been done that can be to suppress it? Would anything else arrest the rebellion now in progress in this and perhaps in other worlds? As the great fly-wheel is needed in a vast system of machinery, is not this awful penalty needed in the government of God--needed as an additional centripetal force to hold moral beings in their orbits? Were all the wicked annihilated, might not the lesson of sin eventually be forgotten, and some such catastrophe as the apostacy of angels be repeated, and in the end greater suffering and ruin ensue? Who knows? Who can say that endless suffering might not be the dictate of compassion? Severe penalty in human government is often the more merciful. A ten-cent fine as the penalty of murder would be an injustice and cruelty, and cost more lives than the gallows. But our speculations only remind us of the depths of our ignorance, and of the folly of anything like dogmatism in these great fields of inquiry.

As to the nature and degree of a lost soul's sufferings, our speculations are quite as unsatisfactory.

1. By some it is claimed they consist exclusively in the natural consequences of sin. Others deny that natural consequences are in any proper sense punishment, more than are the pains consequent upon the

amputation of a diseased limb; that only positive governmental inflictions deserve the name. But since the existence and consequently the sufferings of lost souls are protracted by the divine edict, all their sufferings are, in a sense, governmental, and the difference here little more than seeming. Perhaps banishment, remorse and unsatisfied passion, and the conscious disapprobation of God and of all other moral beings make up the cup which will be put to the sinner's lips.

2. Others contend that the sufferings of the lost are mainly negative in their character, consisting primarily in deprivation and infinite loss; that their condition is tolerable, and their existence on the whole a good which they would not willingly surrender. This seems hardly to comport with the Master's assertion: "Good were it for that man had he not been born." In the existence of one man, at least, evil manifestly preponderates.

3. Others incline to the view that the effect of suffering in the future world is a growing insensibility, a gradual decay of the soul, until it loses its power to suffer, and in the far future either ceases to be, or continues to exist little more than an inanimate thing.

A satisfactory solution of the problem before us requires an authoritative answer to two questions: (1.) Will those who die sinners continue to sin during their existence? (2.) Will their existence be protracted forever? An affirmative answer to these questions involves all that is essential on this subject to orthodoxy.

What do the Scriptures teach? In place of particularizing passages, allow me to refer to some obvious facts.

1. There are comparatively few allusions in the Old Testament, especially in its earlier records, to future retributions. Its inspired writers draw their motives to obedience almost wholly from the good or evil accruing in this life. This is certainly one of the mysteries. If men were in danger of eternal death; if their destiny "unto the ages of the ages" was conditioned upon their conduct here, it seems remarkable they were not more distinctly apprized of the fact; that almost every motive was urged to secure loyalty to God, except the one Orthodoxy makes over-shadowing.

In explanation it is said the Jew, in his semi-civilized condition, could hardly be reached by other than sensuous considerations. This is not perfectly apparent. The heathen of our day, in culture far below the Jew,

are reached by motives drawn from another state of being; and the missionary who should fail to employ such considerations would not be tolerated by any denomination of evangelical Christians.

It is also truthfully said, the Old Testament is equally reticent as to the rewards of the righteous, and the omission as clearly disproves future rewards as future punishment. It must be admitted that this comparative silence through a lapse of some twenty centuries, during which God was in communication with men, is not easily explained.

Leaving out the utterances of the Great Teacher, there are fewer allusions to future punishment in the New Testament than the Orthodox view would naturally lead us to expect. We find a partial explanation in the fact that considerations of hope and fear, further than needed to arouse the attention and energies of men, are not the most healthful. He who serves God for wages serves himself, not God. Acceptable service springs from considerations of obligation and duty--the highest that can possibly influence moral beings. We should hardly expect, then, Infinite Wisdom would put motives of hope and fear into the foreground. This is not done in the well regulated household. If there be the tacit understanding that the right and power to punish lie behind precepts, it is well for parents to "forbear threatening." That there is such an assumption behind the commands of the New Testament, is evident, I think, to the most casual reader, and perhaps render frequent allusion to the subject both unnecessary and undesirable.

Is not the same thing true, to a lesser extent, of the Old Testament? The ancient Jews, and the Jews of the time of Christ--and I think the same is true of the Jews of our day--accepted the doctrine of future punishment. They find it in their sacred writings. There is in them much, at least, corroborating it, and nothing inconsistent with it, and it seems to me a tacit assumption of its truth is diffused throughout the whole volume. Still we are surprised to find so little on this great theme.

2. Another fact has stumbled many minds. I refer to the command given to Adam and to Noah and his sons (Gen. 1:28, and Gen. 9:1-7) to multiply and be fruitful, to bring forth abundantly and replenish the earth. Probably from one-third to one-half our race have died in early life, for whom we entertain a good hope. But what uncounted multitudes during centuries of which history has made no record, have been the rejecters of

the essential Christ! Though we may not know what has occurred in the last hours of life, yet to human appearance, if orthodoxy be orthodoxy, it were better for them had they never been born. How a benevolent Father could encourage, or even allow, such uncounted masses to be born, with the certainty of endless suffering before them, is also a mystery.

God's regard for natural law may be suggested. But this leaves unexplained the encouragement in His Word to multiply our race.

Our minds are somewhat relieved by the probability, amounting almost to a certainty, that it will appear when the last man of Adam's race shall die, should that event ever occur, that but a very small proportion--perhaps not one in a million, or a hundred million--will be found among the lost. Our earth has come to stay. It is on its march to millennial glory, with a momentum increasing geometrically, and the more born the more will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Christ will see the travail of his soul and will be satisfied. The history of our globe in the end will gratify God.

3. Another fact having a tremendous bearing on this subject is: God allows vast multitudes to live scores of years in this world in sin, and to reap its bitter fruits, and He does it consistently with infinite benevolence. Is there anything incredible, or very improbable, in the theory, He may do the same thing in another world, and forever? There is a reason ample for allowing this here; may not the same reason obtain hereafter? If it is not inconsistent with infinite goodness here; why should it be there? Surely it is just as possible for God to do a great as a little wrong.

4. Another fact of awful significance, is the veritable existence of wicked spirits in the spirit world. This is beyond controversy a Biblical fact, and one confirmed by events of daily observation. It is a truth so obvious as to command the belief of the heathen as well as the Christian world. Are these beings, or any portion of them, as was once supposed, the spirits of departed men? Whether so or not, this fact establishes the existence of wicked and suffering souls in that world from which death separates us. These beings were living at the birth of our race, and have been living and exerting an awful influence upon the affairs of our world while the centuries have been silently passing, and manifest no indications of decay. There is infinite meaning in these facts.

5. Another significant fact, is the strong divine desire breathed through

the whole sacred volume, and making itself felt, I think, in all human hearts, to bring men into harmony with God. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you [to induce you] to will, and to work for his good pleasure." Surely, that to which we are exhorted to address ourselves with fear and trembling is not a thing of trivial importance. It is of such infinite moment, God is working in us to effect it. This passage is but an illustration of the whole animus of the Bible. The earnest and urgent solicitude for the recovery of the sinner here and now, expressed in the Word of God, is exceedingly suggestive.

6. The declaration of our Saviour, recorded Mat. 12:32, and Mark 3:29: "But whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come." "And whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin, because they said he had an unclean spirit," is very significant. It was not an hypothetical case the Saviour had in mind. He meant to affirm that the Pharisees, who accused Him of casting out devils by Beelzebub, had committed a sin which would be perpetuated forever--an eternal sin, which would never be repented of and never forgiven. His whole subsequent treatment of these men accorded with this fact. He never afterward invited them into His kingdom, and there is an awful intimation that He felt no desire, and would make no further effort for their salvation: "Therefore He spake unto them in parables, that seeing they might not perceive, and hearing they might not understand." It looks as though their sin was so aggravating as to make it incompatible with the general interests that it should be forgiven. The same general thought the Saviour puts into the mouth of Abraham. "There is a great gulf fixed that none may pass over from thence to us." There is a "sin unto death," for which the Apostle discouraged prayer. I can not avoid the conviction that these passages contain the assertion that there are, at least, some men who will never be restored to happiness. Is there not fearful reason for the apprehension this is true of all who die incorrigible?

7. The Sacred writers describe the duration of the punishment of the sinner, and of the felicity of the righteous by the same words and the same figures of speech. They use the word (Greek word) indiscriminately. "These shall go away into eternal punishment, and the righteous into eternal life." "Depart ye cursed into eternal fire." "Punished

with eternal destruction." Than which, I think, no word in the Greek tongue expresses more clearly the idea of endlessness. The phrase (Greek words), rendered in the Received Version, "forever and forever," and in the margin of the New: "Unto the ages of the ages" is used eighteen times in the New Testament. Fifteen times it relates to God and his attributes, once to the future bliss of His people, twice to the duration of the sinner's sufferings. A construction may be put upon these passages, I am aware, consistent with limited suffering, or with none at all; but no manly man is willing to trifle with such a subject.

8. Another consideration of great weight is, the doctrine of endless punishment has been accepted by the Christian church. Says Dr. Charles Hodge: "It is almost an invincible presumption that the Bible does teach the unending punishment of the finally impenitent, that all Christian churches have so understood it. There is no other way in which this unanimity of judgment can be accounted for. To refer it to some philosophical speculation would be to assign it to a cause altogether inadequate to the effect. Much less can this general consent be accounted for on the ground that the doctrine in question is congenial to the human mind, and is believed for its own sake, without any adequate support from the Scriptures. The reverse is the case. It is a doctrine the natural heart revolts from and struggles against, and to which it submits only under stress of authority. The church believes the doctrine because it must believe it, or renounce faith in the Bible, and give up all the hopes founded upon its promises."<sup>67</sup>

In simple regard for truth, from both a rational and Scriptural point of view, I confess, with feelings of pain I am unable to translate into language, I can see no escape from what is termed the orthodox view of the future of incorrigible men. The answer "Dark," "dark," "dark," given by a dying member of Congress, to the question, "What are your prospects for the future?" seems to me, in reference to all who die impenitent, deeply inwrought into the language and spirit of the Word of God. I confess I can see absolutely no hope in the Sacred Oracles for one who neglects in this life to take refuge in the Christ of Nazareth. But have you absolutely no hope, it is asked, for the unconverted dead? It is impossible for me to say I absolutely have none. I doubt whether any human man can say this. We may on some points have misinterpreted the Word of God. Human judgment is fallible. Some new light may break from the

Sacred Oracles. The future of those who have died unforgiven may be more tolerable than our interpretations of the Bible and the book of Nature has led us to fear. We can say to the dear ones, as we close their eyes in death, "Adieu," and find consolation in the infinite compassion and wisdom of the dear Heavenly Father, and patiently wait for the breaking of day.

## **VIII. THE CHRIST OF NAZARETH--WHO WAS HE?**

DURING the last eighteen centuries almost no other question has been so frequently propounded. No other has awakened so profound an interest, or been so thoroughly and largely discussed. The Christ of Nazareth is, beyond dispute, the tallest figure of history. His is the greatest name history mentions. Already it is far above every name that is named, and the interest it has awakened is growing more intense as the years are passing, and promises to become the absorbing and overwhelming theme of human thought. Still, after centuries of discussion, the riddle of His being remains unsolved. Even the Christian world are not agreed who He was. The difficulty grows largely out of the apparently discrepant representations of the Sacred Word, making Him both God and man. The problem is, to find some theory which shall harmonize these apparent contradictions.

That the Saviour of men was in some sense divine, no intelligent man doubts; in what sense is the question upon which I propose to outline a few thoughts.

A large communion of Christians,<sup>68</sup> who discard all creeds except the Bible, are reputed to hold that Christ was divine, in the sense of possessing delegated divine attributes. This, I think, was not the view of the scholarly founder of that denomination; and certainly, in the absence of the clearest proof, I would not attribute it to any of his followers, as nothing can be more absurd. The idea of delegating infinity to a finite being, omnipresence to one who is limited, or uncreated existence to one who began to be, is utterly inadmissible.

The theory that Christ was almost, but not quite divine, almost not quite

created, almost not quite equal to God, is equally absurd, and can gain credence only with the most illogical and unthinking.

But three theories relating to Christ's divinity are worthy our attention:

I. Christ was in all respects a man, but distinguished from every other by the plenitude of divine influence and the presence of the indwelling God. This is the Unitarian view, though largely accepted by those who discard the Unitarian name. "It is objected," says Dr. Channing, the most accredited exponent of the Unitarian faith, "that we deny the divinity of Christ. In the sense in which many, and perhaps a majority, of Christians interpret it, we do not deny it. We believe firmly in the divinity of Christ's mission and offices; that He spoke with divine authority, and was a bright image of the divine perfections. We believe God dwelt in Him, and communicated His spirit without measure to Him. We believe Jesus Christ was the most glorious display, expression and representative of God; so that, in seeing Him and knowing Him, we see and know the invisible Father; so when Christ came, God visited the world and dwelt with men, more conspicuously than at any former period. In Christ's words we hear God speaking; in His miracles we behold God acting; in His character and life we see an unsullied image of God's purity and love. We believe, then, in the divinity of Christ, as the word is often and properly used. . . . We honor Christ as the Son, representative and image of the Supreme God."<sup>69</sup>

The extent to which it is possible for one mind to be taken possession of by another, finds a striking illustration in the Demoniactal Possessions of the New Testament. In one case the demoniacs gained such mastery over their victim, as to use his organs of speech and say, "my name is Legion, for we are many." The Divine Logos might possibly have taken such possession of the man Christ Jesus, as to have acted and spoken through Him; and here, it is claimed, we find the explanation of those passages relied upon to prove His Supreme Deity.

This theory makes Christ differ from Paul and other eminently pious men, only in the measure of the indwelling spirit. But such possession does not imply divinity. Had Paul possessed ten or a hundred-fold more of the divine presence, we should be stumbled to read: "In the beginning was Paul, and Paul was with God, and Paul was God; all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. And Paul

became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." "Before Abraham was I am." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die;" or hear him pray, "Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory I had with thee before the world was." And still more astonished to hear many angels round about the throne--the number of whom was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousand of thousands--saying with a great voice, "Worthy is Paul that was slain, to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing," and to behold the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fall down and worship at his feet.

The idea that any degree of divine influence communicated to a man, can invest him with a single divine attribute, or make him in any proper sense divine is preposterous. No one familiar with the Sacred Scriptures can fail to see that they put an infinite gulf between Christ and a mere man; that they make him the hero of the whole book, lift him infinitely above anything merely human, and treat him with reverence due only to God. They ascribe to him every name by which God is known and every attribute and perfection by which God is distinguished. The Supreme Deity of the Man Christ Jesus is beyond rational dispute a Scriptural doctrine.

I fully believe God is revealed in His Word as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit--that the Son, the Second Person in the Trinity, became incarnate in the person of the Christ of Nazareth. The theory then that He was a mere man, I am obliged to discard or abandon my confidence in the Bible as the Word of God.

II. The second theory ascribes to Christ two natures, a human and a divine, and assigns all that was human about Him to the human, and all that was divine to the divine. Its formula is "two natures and one person."

This dual theory is properly termed the Orthodox view, as it has, for more than fourteen centuries, been the prevailing belief of the Christian church. It was promulgated as a canon of faith by the council of Chalcedon, 451, as follows: "We teach that Jesus is perfect as respects Godhead, and perfect as respects manhood; that He is truly God and truly man,

consisting of a rational soul and a body; that He is consubstantial with the Father as to His divinity, and consubstantial with us as to His humanity, and like us in all respects, sin excepted." "With this council," says Dr. Charles Hodge, "the conflict on this doctrine so far ceased that there has been no modification of it since." Still acquiescence in this decree of Chalcedon has been and still is far from universal.<sup>70</sup>

"The oldest fathers had no particular distinct conception of the human soul of Christ. They did not deny its existence, but they made no distinct and express mention of it."<sup>71</sup>

"Previous to this Council the dual theory was not the doctrine of the church."<sup>72</sup>

Dr. Charles Hodge presents the theory thus: "As the human body retains all its properties as matter, and the soul all its attributes as spirit, in their union in one person; so the humanity and divinity retain each its own peculiar properties in their union in the person of Christ. And as intelligence, sensibility and will are the properties of the human soul, without which it ceases to be a human soul, it follows that the human soul of Christ retains its intelligence, sensibility and will. But intelligence, sensibility and will are no less essential properties of the divine nature, and therefore were retained after its connection with the human nature of Christ. In teaching, therefore, that Christ was truly man and truly God, the Scriptures teach that He had a finite intelligence and will; also an infinite intelligence. In Him, therefore, as the Church has ever maintained, there are and were two wills."

"In Him," says Prof. H. B. Smith, "the two natures were united in one person. Each nature remained perfect in the union; the Godhead perfect, the manhood perfect; the union between the two is perfect. The Godhead is that of the second person of the Trinity; the manhood consists of a body and a reasonable soul. The Godhead existed to all eternity, consubstantial with the Father; the manhood was assumed in the body of the Virgin Mary."<sup>73</sup>

The Westminster Confession reads: "The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, being very and eternal God, did take on Him man's nature, and all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof. . . . So that two whole, perfect, distinct natures, the God and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person."<sup>74</sup>

It is unnecessary to cite authorities, as there is a remarkable unanimity in the views of our standard theological writers; also in the considerations by which these views are maintained and in the figures by which they are illustrated. The favorite illustration, the only one I remember ever to have seen, is, and for fourteen hundred years has been, the union of two natures in a human being, a body and a soul constituting one person.

No one, I presume, claims for this theory direct Biblical proof. It is accepted rather as an inference from certain Scriptural declarations; or as a theory to reconcile the apparently contradictory assertions that Christ was both God and man than as revealed truth.

Assuming Christ was God, this theory claims He was also man. The proof is:

1. He is with great frequency called a man. He called Himself, according to the Sacred Records, more than sixty times "the Son of Man." He ate, drank, rested and slept; suffered, rejoiced and wept; was tempted, grieved, indignant; lived and died like other men. He manifested weakness, dependence, want and ignorance. "Of myself," He says, "I can do nothing." He exhibited all the attributes and peculiarities, physical and mental, of other men.
2. "He was tempted in all points as we are." As "God can not be tempted," the inference is very natural that He was in possession of a human soul, to which the temptation was addressed.
3. He "advanced in wisdom." As this could not be true of an infinite mind, we almost necessarily infer a finite mind.
4. Christ was a "Man of sorrows," His earthly lot was peculiarly one of suffering. This, it is said, implies a human soul, as nothing can be more absurd than the idea that the Divine Mind suffers.
5. But a stronger proof is found in the declaration, "Of that day and hour, knoweth no man, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only." Did Christ possess but one nature, and that divine, this, it is said, could not be true.

As two natures, it is claimed, are clearly ascribed to Christ, a human and divine, we can not, whatever objections may be suggested, without disloyalty to the Sacred Word, adopt any other view.

These considerations are certainly weighty, and it is no wonder they have been largely accepted as strong and satisfactory proof of the dual theory. But plausible as they appear they are regarded by many as inconclusive, and the difficulties they encounter as insuperable.

1. The first argument assumes that the appellations "Man" and "Son of Man" must relate to a human soul, as they are wholly inapplicable to the Divine Logos. But even a casual examination will satisfy anyone, that these appellations usually, if not in every case in which they are applied to Christ in the New Testament, designate His divine nature, e.g., John 3:13: "No man hath ascended into heaven but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." John 6:62: "What if ye should behold the Son of Man ascending where he was." Mat. 16:27: "The Son of Man shall come, in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then shall he render to every man according to his deeds." Luke 9:26: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in his own glory, and the glory of his Father." 1 Cor. 15:21: "By man came death; by man also came the resurrection of the dead." "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sin." There can be no doubt in these and numerous other passages that the terms "Man" and "Son of Man" refer to Christ's divine nature, and of course fail to prove the existence of a human.

The declaration of the angel to Mary--Luke 1:35: "Also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God" makes it very plain that that which we have taken to be a human soul, was the Divine Logos. Certainly, if Christ had a human soul it was the thing born in Bethlehem, but that thing was the Son of God. The assertion of the Apostle, "The second man is the Lord from heaven," is coming, as Bushnell remarks, as near saying the man of the incarnate person is the Lord Himself as he well could. Such assertions, and the whole trend of divine teaching, make it plain to my mind that the soul which animated the Christ of Nazareth was simply the Divine Logos.

The human traits of Christ, from which a human soul has been inferred, are nearly all ascribed to God in the theophanies of the Old Testament. The Shekinah, called by the later Jewish writers, the Logos, which was beyond doubt the Christ of the New Testament, talked and reasoned, was tempted, grieved, impatient, jealous, angry, and exhibited nearly all the

indications of a human soul. He did when incarnated fifteen hundred years later, yet no one ever suspected the presence of such a soul.

The same is true of that wondrous personage who visited Abraham by the oaks of Mamre. He was admittedly God; yet how wondrously human! He traveled, talked and looked like a man. He ate, drank, rested, rebuked Sarah, submitted to the washing of feet, and appeared not to know whether the Sin of Sodom was "altogether according to the cry of it," and was on His way to ascertain. Yet no one ever resorted to the theory of two souls to explain the facts. The human traits of Christ prove, not that He had a human soul, but that the divine soul is strangely human.

2. The declaration, "Christ advanced in wisdom," may be ad sensum, or a gradual apparent development. But whatever the interpretation, the passage, as will be seen in the sequel, requires no such explanation as the dual theory.

3. The dual theory is largely based upon the assumption the divine mind can not suffer, but no such assumption finds warrant in the Word of God. Is not, at least, some degree of suffering implied in Gen. 6:6: "And it repented the Lord that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart?" In the declarations: "Forty years was I grieved with this generation;" "In all their afflictions he was afflicted;" "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me; my compassions are kindled together." Can the Divine Mind be the subject of anger, pity, grief, indignation and long-suffering, and not suffer?

The evidence of divine suffering is just as convincing in the New Testament, e.g., "Looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross;" "Who, in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, . . . learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and became unto them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." The Author of Eternal Salvation is the Divine Logos, and He learned obedience by the things He suffered. "For in that he suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory?"

But how, it is asked, can an infinitely holy and happy mind suffer? How, in a universe like this, it may be asked, can a mind be infinitely holy and

happy and not suffer? How holy must an earthly father be to see his child sinking into remediless despair and feel no pain? Suffering is not the necessary antithesis of happiness. It often mingles in the soul's melody, like some minor strain in an anthem, making its diapason broader and its music sadder, yet sweeter. Indeed, the absence of suffering--the state of mind which can not weep with those that weep--is so unfitting it would arouse a sense of self-disapprobation, which would itself be suffering. Sympathy with a suffering universe is not only consistent with the divine happiness, but essential to it. The idea that the Divine Mind submitted to no self-denial, made no sacrifices, endured no suffering to redeem this world, contradicts the whole letter and spirit of the Bible. Christ's sufferings then, afford no evidence of a human soul.

4. The argument from the prayers of Christ is equally fallacious. It assumes that the Divine Mind can not pray; but a slight examination will satisfy us that most of the prayers offered by the Son of God during His earthly life were emanations from the divine nature. The real meaning of the prayer at the grave of Lazarus was that the "multitude might believe that Thou didst send me." The long prayer recorded in John 17 commences thus: "Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee; even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that whatsoever thou hast given him to them, he should give eternal life. . . . I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." We need better proof than this to establish the dual theory.

5. The argument chiefly relied upon is the declaration "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only;" were it not for this, it is doubtful whether the dual theory could ever have gained acceptance in the Christian church. It is certainly one of the most remarkable assertions of the New Testament. In the connection, the Saviour had given a particular and almost minute account of "that day." He had said Jerusalem should be compassed about with armies; the temple should be so utterly destroyed that not one stone should be left upon another. He had told of false prophets, and their power to deceive; of wars and famine and earthquakes; and how his people should be hated and persecuted; and that all should occur during the life of that generation; and we are startled at the assertion, He was

ignorant of the time of their occurrence. It is a relief to learn that but two of the evangelists--Matthew and Mark--record the verse; that the latter omits the phrase, "not even the Son," and that the marginal reading of the former, in the New Version, asserts "many authorities, some ancient, omit not even the Son." The genuineness of the clause may fairly be questioned. But even on the assumption of its genuineness, it strikes me as a very frail support of the dual theory.

That theory assumes that Christ was God in full possession of omniscience, and all divine perfections, associated with a human soul. The problem for this theory to solve is, How could He, fully conscious that He did know the day and the hour, assert that he did not? Evidently what he knew in any way, whether through a human or a divine nature, he was not ignorant of. Manifestly if Christ was at the time in possession of infinite knowledge, such an assertion was not possible. The dual theory breaks down under its chief support.

While disposed to treat with respect a theory which has, to such an extent, commanded the suffrages of the Christian church, I am compelled to say the considerations urged in its support will not bear examination. It is confessedly a mere philosophical speculation born to explain facts which, in my view, admit of a vastly more simple and rational interpretation. It also lies open to objections which I deem absolutely insuperable.

1. It makes no allowance for Christ's human condition, but assumes, as has been said, his conscious possession, from birth to death, of all the attributes of the Supreme God. If it does not we have no use for it, as every thing human in the earthly life of the Son of God can be explained without it.

2. The theory of two distinct perfect souls--a man and a God--in one body, using the same physical organs--the union constituting virtually a third person, who acts and speaks sometimes as the one, sometimes as the other, more frequently as both, is clumsy, unnatural and antecedently improbable. It presents an anomaly unlike anything in heaven above, in earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. A theory, to say the least, imposing such a tremendous tax on human credulity should be summarily dismissed, unless sustained by the most irrefragable proof.

We are not surprised that the advocates of this theory, when brought face

to face with it, should disown it, and deny that the human soul of Christ was a person, or anything more than a mere impersonal nature. Says Prof. Henry B. Smith: "Christ was but one person--and His personality was from His divine nature. There is nothing in the Scriptures to show anything like a two-fold personality--two Christs, a man and a God. . . . There is as much evidence, and of the same kind, that He was one person, as there is in regard to any other man of history. There are two ways of showing this: (1) He always uses the first personal pronoun: 'Before Abraham was I am;' 'The glory I had with thee before the world was.' (2) He is never spoken of as if the man and God had personal relations, or conversed with each other, as in the case of the Trinity. This person had its personality from the Divine Person. . . . There was not a human personality. There was a human person perhaps impersonal, or a personality merged in the Divine Person."<sup>75</sup> Dr. Charles Hodge, with equal inconsistency, says: "Christ had a human body and a rational soul, constituting a perfect and complete human nature. This human soul retained its intelligence, sensibility and will, without which it could not have been a soul; but intelligence, sensibility and will are no less essential properties of the divine nature. . . . In teaching, therefore, that Christ was truly man and God, the Scriptures teach that He had a finite intelligence and will, also an infinite intelligence. In Him, therefore, as the church has ever maintained, there are, and were, two wills;" and after asserting, perhaps an hundred times, Christ had a human soul, he says: "This human nature of Christ, separately considered, is impersonal. . . . To personality, both rational and distinct consistency is essential. The latter the human nature of Christ never possessed. The Son of God did not unite Himself with a human person, but with a human nature. His human nature, therefore, though endowed with intelligence and will, may be, and, in fact, is, in the person of Christ, impersonal."<sup>76</sup>

It is not perfectly clear to all minds how a being can possess intelligence, sensibility and will, and all the attributes and activities of a man--eat, drink, sleep, talk, and pray, suffer and weep, and finally bear in his own body the agony, or its equivalent, due human guilt, and still be nothing more than an "impersonal nature." If a nonentity, a mere abstraction, can think and plan, what evidence is there of a personal God, or of the existence of any person? The truth, from which there is no escape, is, Christ's human nature was a person or it was not. If it was, two persons tenanted a single body; if it was not, it is a myth, existing only in the brain

that conceives it. The formula, "two natures and one person," in the sense in which the words are used, is a self-contradiction, too obvious to deceive a child.

3. A decisive objection to the theory of a human soul is the silence of the Bible in reference to it. Had a veritable man, in possession, as Knapp claims, of superior natural endowments, been united with the Divine Logos during his earthly life, and he man's greatest benefactor--the one who suffered crucifixion for his race and the punishment of human sin, is it not incredible that we find in the sacred history no allusion to him, not even his name, not so much as a hint he ever existed? In that Babe in the manger, in that Youth of Nazareth, in that Man of miracle and prayer, is it possible there resided two distinct souls, and during His earthly life no act was performed, or recorded word spoken, that ever aroused, so far as we know, such a suspicion?

4. This silence becomes more significant, when we reflect how frequently His body is referred to, often, too, in connections in which his human soul, had He possessed one, must have been mentioned, e.g., "The Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." If the Word became anything more, if it became a thinking rational soul, was the omission to announce it possible? "Sacrifices and offerings thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared for me." Can we believe a soul, also, was prepared, and no allusion to it? He was manifest in the flesh." "Every spirit that confesseth not that Christ is come in the flesh." He who counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God "took on Him the form of a servant"--only the material form. "Was made in the likeness of man." "Since, therefore, the children are sharers of flesh and blood, he himself in like manner partook of the same." Was He also a sharer with them of a finite human soul?

5. If Christ had a human soul, it is a little remarkable we hear nothing of it before His earthly life, and nothing after. Previous to His advent He lingered long in the temple, and acted a great part in Jewish history, but no one ever imagined He was other than God. After His earthly life, He came again. He met the Beloved Disciple. His form was still "like unto a Son of Man," but His language is utterly inconsistent with the possession of a human soul. He is still standing at the door of millions of human hearts, present wherever His people meet, and filling the world with His glory; but no echo reaches us from that human soul. Where in the realm

of space is it?

6. While we find nothing in the Sacred Word favoring the dual theory, we find much not easily reconciled with it, e.g., "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." This and similar passages, in effect, assert that the Divine Logos Himself became a Man, and are certainly out of all harmony with the theory that He simply, without change, took a man into union with Himself. Taking a partner in business, a pupil, or a wife, is certainly not becoming a pupil or a wife.

Nor is it easy to harmonize Christ's temptation in the wilderness with this theory. Would Satan attempt to seduce into sin the unclouded, Infinite Mind? Is it said it was the human soul that was assailed? But if "Christ had His personality in the Divine Person," what boots it which mind was addressed? If the human was irradiated by the Divine, in perfect subjection to it, and could be reached only through or in the presence of it, what hope of success could the tempter have had?

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst." "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." "No man hath ascended into heaven but he that came down out of heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." Was it possible for Christ as Christ, if constituted of two souls, to claim ubiquity?

"Glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the world was." "That all might honor the Son even as they honor the Father." "I am the way, the truth and the life." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "I and my Father are one." These passages, if the dual theory is to be received, can not refer to the entire Christ. But they were evidently so understood, and the error, so far as we know, was never corrected.

It is remarkable that the Sacred writers, if they referred sometimes to the divine nature of Christ and sometimes to His human, and sometimes to both, had not avoided confusion and misapprehension by indicating the fact, and the nature to which they referred. It is remarkable that the writer of the Hebrews, in saying, "Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever," had not cautioned his readers against applying the assertion to the entire Christ; and that the Apostle, in the declaration: "He was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor," had not advised his readers that the

pronoun He, in the sentence, is used in two entirely different senses--that it was one nature which was rich, but an entirely different one that became poor--that the former designates the only divine nature of Christ which was ever rich; the latter to the human, the only one which could become poor. It is also remarkable that the historian of the resurrection of Lazarus had not been a little more explicit, and advised us that the Being who said, "I am the resurrection and the life," was not the same who afterward groaned in spirit and wept; and that He who offered that humble prayer was not the one who, a few moments later, wakened Lazarus from his sleep. It would have avoided misconception had the writer so labelled each word and act as to have indicated its source.

7. But the objection to this theory, of all others the most damaging, is its robbery of God. It takes from Him the very traits Christ came to reveal, and assigns them to an imaginary man. Christ came to represent God, not to the human race alone, but to the universe of intelligences; not His omnipotence; omniscience and omnipresence, or His infinite goodness; these needed no such illustration. He came to reveal the fact that He is meek and lowly in heart, and in deep sympathy with the beings He has made; that He bears their burdens and sorrows, is touched with the feeling of their infirmities, and is willing to make infinite sacrifices for their welfare. "He took the form of a servant," "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give His life a ransom for many." He toiled and taught in streets and synagogues, dried human tears, wept over human guilt, bowed in sorrow unto death to save men. This revelation--of the righteousness of God--constituted the essence and gist of the atonement. But to make this revelation it was necessary to leave the splendors of the upper worship, veil the effulgence of Deity, take the form, and submit to the conditions of man, and thus become man. But this theory denudes God of what is most tender, human and bewilderingly fascinating, of the very traits Christ came to earth to reveal, and transfers them to an unknown man; thrusts a human soul between us and God; robs the obedience, sufferings and death of Christ of all their divine significance, and makes the divine being suffer and die by proxy. It denudes the Gospel of its power, the cross of its attractions, and the atonement of all that makes it an atonement.

What Christian heart is not pained at the declaration of Dr. Charles Hodge: "The Divine Mind is immutable and impassible; therefore neither

the obedience nor suffering of Christ were the obedience and suffering of the Divine Mind."77 The effect of such an assertion is that of assuring the youth bowing in tears of gratitude over the grave of a mother, that she shed no tears for him and made no sacrifices except by proxy; that it was a stranger's prayers and night vigils which made him what he is. We are not surprised to read from Doctor Channing: "To escape the difficulty [that God suffered] we are told that Christ suffered as a man, not as God. But if man only suffered, if only a finite human mind suffered, if God was perfectly happy on the cross, where, we ask, was the infinite atonement?-where the boasted hope which this doctrine is said to give the sinner?"78

8. But admitting the dual theory to be true, what of it? What is the finite in connection with the infinite? Not so much as a taper to the sun, a drop mingling in the illimitable sea. Subordinated, overwhelmed, lost, what did it signify? What part could it have acted in the earthly life of the Son of God?

III. The third theory of the person of Christ is termed the doctrine of the Kenosis, or the Kenotic theory, from the Greek [Greek word] meaning to empty. It is given, it is claimed, in Phil. 2:5-8: "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." The theory is what this passage is understood to assert, the Divine Logos became a man by emptying Himself. It makes Christ what the Bible represents Him, God manifest in the flesh. But since the infinite can not fully manifest itself through the finite, it holds we have in Christ but a partial limited and, in effect, finite manifestation of God. Hence the dependent and subordinate condition of Christ while in the flesh, and the human facts and characteristics of His life.

God, in creating children, eternal associates with Himself, realized His highest ideal, made them like Himself--the highest type of being. When about to make man, He retired to His own bosom for a model, and brought forth a being in His own similitude--a duplicate as near as possible of Himself. This great truth is God's first recorded utterance about man--the greatest fact pertaining to man. It is asserted, Gen. 1:26:

"And God said let us make man, in our own image, after our likeness." Gen. 6:1: "God created man; in the likeness of God created he him, male and female created he them." Gen. 9:7: "In the image of God created he man." Man is declared, 1 Cor. 1:7, to be "the image and glory of God." James 3:4: "Therewith curse we men, who are made in the likeness of God." The Psalmist says: "I shall awake in his likeness."

We find this truth, not in these declarations alone, it is virtually written on every page of the Bible. There is not a word in the Sacred Records about God which does not imply and assume it. This essential likeness is the only condition on which it is possible to know any thing about God. If the words intellect, sensibility and will, applied to Him, do not mean essentially the same as when applied to us; if feeling, thought, memory, joy and sorrow, compassion and love, indignation, anger and grief, right, obligation, natural and moral attributes are not in God essentially what they are in us, and if we may not go to our own consciousness for their definitions, we have no means of knowing what they are; the Bible is a hieroglyphic to which we have no key.

This essential similarity is implied in the fact we may know God, commune with His Son, and grow into His moral likeness. It is virtually asserted in such declarations as these: "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." "God is love, and he that loveth is born of God, and knoweth him."

This truth is not to be confounded with the pantheistic theory of Schelling and Hegel, that God and man are identical in substance--that man is a part of God, or a finite expression of the infinite. It is, that the divine and human are of like spiritual essence, differing not in kind, as man differs from the lower animal, but as a father differs from a child, or one man differs from another. They differ only as the finite differs from the infinite--as the inch of space I hold in my hand from infinite space; or as the moment of time from illimitable duration. This is the teaching of inspiration from its commencement to its close. It is implied in the very idea of a revelation of God to men. The thoughtful mind, therefore, will not be stumbled at the assertion, God is an infinite man, or, conversely, an infinite man is God; and a finite God is man. Is not this great truth--the wondrous relation between God and man--shadowed forth in the Epiphanies of the Old Testament? In almost every instance in which God

appears to men, He assumes the human form, and seems very much like a man; and that Being who appeared to the Beloved Disciple on the Island of Patmos was, in form, "like unto a son of man." Were not these Old Testament Epiphanies designed to prepare the world for the coming of a divine personage, "made like unto His brethren?"

The Kenotic theory holds that the Divine Mind, in taking "the form of a servant," in submitting to the conditions and limitations of the flesh, ipso facto, and necessarily emptied itself, and presented only a finite expression of Deity, and thus became in the true sense of the word, man. This partial occultation explains, we think, Christ's human traits and renders the presence of a human soul superfluous.

This theory, if admissible, affords, it will be admitted, a satisfactory solution of the great problem how Christ could be both human and divine, the god man.

But it is objected that it is not admissible; that the idea the Divine Mind denuded itself of natural attributes, that an uncreated being became temporarily created, omnipresence became temporarily limited, the infinite became finite, is an absurdity, and not worthy a moment's consideration. This doubtless is true, but the theory involves no such absurdity, and consequently lies open to no such objection. No one probably ever believed God divested Himself of a single attribute, or ever for a moment became finite. The theory no more involves this idea than does the fact the Holy Spirit is imparted by measure to a human heart. So far from being absurd that the Divine Incarnation should result in partial obscuration, it is not easy to conceive how it could be otherwise. The Supreme God within the compass of humanity, the infinite in the finite, or fully manifested through the finite; who believes it? As well talk of crowding the whole illimitable sunshine through the narrow crevice in the wall. How can God manifest infinite strength through an infant's arm? How could an infant's brain become the receptacle of the infinite joy, the infinite emotions and infinite love of God? Who credits any such idea? It is a universal law that mind, at least its expression, is affected, by the medium through which it acts, as is the light, by the medium through which it shines. As the sunshine penetrating the cloud is obscured, and depleted of its effulgence, so was the Son of Righteousness by its expression through a human brain. Had not the Apostle precisely this illustration in mind when he denominated Christ "the effulgence" of His

## Father's glory?

Had the mind of a Newton been put into the brain of an infant who believes it could have calculated an eclipse, or written a Principia? Who believes the babe in the manger of Bethlehem was in conscious possession of omniscience, of infinite attributes, or of the fact it was the Maker and Monarch of the world, or that it came to this knowledge by other than slow and gradual approach? How else can we understand the prophecy of Isaiah, 7:14: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat when he knoweth to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land, whose two kings thou abhorrest, shall be forsaken." That this prophecy relates to Christ, Professor Cowles assures us has been "fully believed by the great body of Christians in every age,"<sup>79</sup> and seems clearly taught in Matthew, 1:22, 23: "Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord, through the prophet, saying, Behold the virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel." This prophecy clearly teaches that the infant Immanuel would be ignorant and gradually come to a knowledge of good and evil. If overshadowed and limited by His earthly condition in childhood, there certainly is no absurdity in the idea that the same might have been true in His maturer years. He was as truly divine while sleeping in the manger of Bethlehem as when teaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

No one, we suppose, ever claimed that the Second Person of the Trinity was circumscribed or limited to the human frame He animated during his incarnation, any more than He was to the pillar of cloud and fire during its sojourn in the tabernacle and temple, or than is the Holy Spirit to the heart of which it has taken possession. The beams of the glorious sun shining through a cloud are darkened, obscured, shorn of their strength, yet, at the same moment, they are crowding solar systems. So while "this mortality had power to thus overshadow him," His presence was crowding immensity. The whole theory is the Son of God assuming physical conditions, was subject to physical laws; that His expression through a material medium was restricted to the capacities and possibilities of that medium. We do not claim to comprehend the great fact of the Kenosis. There is mystery about it, but no more, we think, than about the incarnation itself. Still we deny that the theory is absurd. It

strikes us as rational, and the one which would naturally first occur to any one familiar with the facts of Christology.

So obvious is the Kenotic explanation of these facts that multitudes who strenuously hold the theory of two natures are compelled to admit the Divine was but partially, and to a limited extent, manifested through the incarnation. Says Prof. H. B. Smith: "When Christ assumed our nature He submitted to all its conditions. Gentle must have been the contact between the Eternal Word and the infant child, feeble the assimilation between such a glorious being and such a frail tabernacle. He assumed, yet consumed not our nature. Flesh and blood could not abide the full pressure and intense effulgence of the undimmed brightness of the Son of God. It was a part of the estate which our Redeemer chose that He should become a very child--an infant in the weakness of its powers, an infant whom its mother might press to her bosom and love with a most motherly, though most hallowed affection. The Eternal Word became a child without speech, who was yet to begin to call Mary, blessed among women, by the name mother. Who had yet to learn to speak the language of men, though He had through eternity spoken face to face with God the Father as His co-equal Son. . . . His disciples were slow to discern His divinity. Sometimes it seemed to break out like hardly-suppressed fire, or like a light shining in darkness. . . . He ever seemed to speak of His divine glory as something He remembered, or as something He was still to attain unto, rather than as an object of present possession. . . . And as Jesus came ever nearer the termination of His earthly mission, He seems, on the one hand, to have had a constantly increasing sense of intimate fellowship with God. Yet, on the other, to feel more and more the burden He must bear alone."<sup>80</sup>

Professor Bruce represents the Reformed Churches, though tenaciously adhering to the dual theory, as holding that "Christ concealed His divinity while in the state of exinanition, and revealed it only in a modified manner, and so far as was needful for the office of that time. The standing phrase for the Kenosis was occultatio, and the favorite illustration was the obscuration of the sun by a dense cloud. . . . The Kenosis or exinanitio was only quasi--an emptying as to use, and manifestation, not as to possession, a hiding of divine glory and divine attributes rather than a self-denudation."<sup>81</sup> He quotes Zanchius as saying: "Under a form of a servant, the form of God was so hid that it

scarcely appeared any longer to exist, as is also the light of the sun when covered by a dense cloud.<sup>82</sup>

It is not quite clear why those who believe Christ, by the occultation, became in effect human and finite should have recourse to the unnatural theory of a human soul to explain the human facts of His history. There certainly is no more need of inferring the presence of one human soul than of two.

The Kenotic theory, while involving no absurdity, gives us a rational and Scriptural Christology.

1. It satisfactorily explains, as has been said, the fact that Christ was both divine and human--God and man--making Him the one, by virtue of His own infinite nature; the other by virtue of His limited manifestation. 2. It affords a rational explanation, I think the only one, of many utterances of the Saviour which could have come neither from the unclouded Deity nor from a mere man, and logically necessitate a *tertium quid*, e.g.: "My doctrine is not mine"--an assertion which could not have been made by the Infinite Mind in full consciousness of what it was--"but his that set me," which could not have come from a mere man, born of a human mother in Bethlehem. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? but for this cause came I into the world." "For I spake not of myself, but the Father which sent me; he hath given me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak." Manifestly these utterances are too human to come from the unveiled God, and too divine to come from a mere man. Unless there be a *tertium quid* they are inexplicable. The Apostle plainly ascribes what is most human in Christ to His divine nature, Heb. 5:7: "Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him who was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him, the author of eternal salvation." It was the Author eternal salvation, the divine Logos, of whom this was affirmed. If prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, and learning obedience by the things which He suffered, can be ascribed to the divine nature of Christ, what in His whole utterances and life can not be? And what possible apology can there be for obscuring, complicating, and mystifying His person, by ascribing to Him two natures, which mean two

distinct personal souls, or mean nothing. Since there is not in the Bible an intimation of duality, and while all the facts in the history of our Lord can be rationally and satisfactorily explained on the hypothesis of one nature, why, we ask again, complicate and burden His person by ascribing to Him two?

3. To answer the formidable objection which Mat. 24:36, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, . . . not even the son," presents to the supreme divinity of Christ, Prof. H. B. Smith finds it convenient to resort to the Kenotic theory. He says: "What if Christ did not know the day and hour, as He was not only in the state of humanity, but of humility; does this invalidate, in the least, the evidence of the divine nature? What if His assumption of human nature made it impossible for Him to exercise His divine prerogatives? What if the human body did not or could not at all times permit Him to be conscious of His omnipotence and omniscience, deprived Him of the constant sense of divine bliss and perfection, would that prove they were not His? or would it only prove that when He came into the flesh He submitted to all the conditions of the flesh? What the objection asserts is that there must have been at every instant in the Soul of Christ an equal consciousness of His divine attributes and of His human acts; but this presumption is totally without proof."<sup>83</sup> Professor Smith also finds the Kenotic theory the most convenient explanation of the assertion Christ "advanced in wisdom." He says: "Combining together the whole Scriptural representation, we may perhaps say that, as in the soul and body there is a process of development, so in a limited sense it may be asserted in respect to the person of our Lord, that the union was complete at the beginning, yet there was a process continually going on before the perfect divinity was united to the perfect humanity, and so much of the divinity was imparted at each stage as was necessary for Christ's mission at that stage. There may be a difficulty here lest we seem to infringe upon the divinity; but there is also another difficulty here lest we represent Christ differently from the view in the Scriptures.<sup>84</sup> It is worthy of note that the Professor finds it necessary to virtually deny his own theory to explain the passages on which it chiefly rests.

4. This Kenotic theory affords a rational explanation, and the only one, I think, of the fact that Christ was a man of prayer. Some of his prayers, at least, as we have seen, emanated from His divine nature. But why should the Divine Mind pray? It is a significant fact that there is in the Sacred

Scriptures no intimation the Divine Logos prayed either before or after the incarnation. The only instance given of prayer from the Divine Being, was from the Son of God while in the flesh. Why should he have prayed then? If in conscious possession of infinite power and knowledge, what need of prayer? A solution of the problem is found in the fact, He was made in effect weak, dependent, human, and was constrained to say, "Of myself I can do nothing," by the conditions and limitations to which He voluntarily subjected Himself.

5. The Kenotic theory largely, if not entirely, removes the Unitarian objections to the doctrine of the Divine Trinity and the Supreme Deity of our Lord. These objections assume that Christ was either the Supreme God, in conscious possession of infinite attributes, or a mere man. On this hypothesis they are plausible, and it seems to me weighty and unanswerable. Says Dr. Channing: "We affirm that Jesus was not, and could not be, the God from whom He came, but was another being; and it amazes us that any one can resist this simple truth. The doctrine that Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem, who ate, drank, and slept, who suffered and was crucified; who came from God; who prayed to God; who did God's will, and said on leaving the world, 'I ascend to my Father, and to your Father; to my God, and to your God;' the doctrine that this Jesus was the Supreme God Himself, seems to me a contradiction of reason and Scripture, so flagrant that the simple statement is its own refutation.<sup>85</sup> But there is an alternative. It is possible that the infinite mind became partially unconscious of what it was, and in effect finite by its manifestation through the flesh. This takes the mystery from the fact that He prayed, and wept, and suffered as a man--in fact was man. It removes the mystery from the fact that the tempter could accost Him in the wilderness, with the hope of decoying Him into sin, and of thus defeating His mission to earth. In a word, it explains how He seemed both finite and infinite, both God and man, and removes much of the mystery of this most mysterious being.

To what extent our Unitarian friends have considered the Kenotic theory, I am not advised. We should naturally suppose they would hail with satisfaction a doctrine which allows them to accept the whole Bible in its natural import; one which fills the chasm separating them from their brethren, and brings them into harmony with the great Christian world; and, more than all, presents Christ of Nazareth as a present, personal,

infinite Saviour of priceless value, and still does violence to no utterance of the Sacred Word.

Finally, our answer to the great question, with which this paper commences, Who was the Christ of Nazareth? is: He was the Divine Logos, who was with God, and was God manifest in the flesh, so far as the infinite can manifest itself through the finite; and, by the occultation thus imposed, became in effect finite, and in the true and proper sense man. In assuming a body, He became like unto His brethren, or came into precisely the relations to the material they sustain. He suffered from hunger, thirst, weariness, from the nails and the spear precisely as we should have suffered. His prayers and tears, His love and sympathy were so human we can understand their meaning and feel their power. He became so like ourselves, we are able to gaze through Him upon the Deity, undazzled by its effulgence, as upon the sun in an eclipse; and the sinning and the lost can approach and trust Him as an elder brother.

## Footnotes

### Chapter 2

1. Elements of Psychology, p. 235.

### Chapter 3

2. Bib. Rep., 1839.
3. Phil. Basis of Theism, p. 306.
4. Moral Phil., p. 17.
5. Phil. Basis of Theism, p. 207.
6. Metaphysical Ethics, pp. 2, 3.
7. Princeton Review, 1830. Art. Regeneration.
8. Phil. Basis of Theism, p. 211.

9. The New Birth, p. 55.

## Chapter 4

10. The New Birth, p. 21.

11. Baptismal regeneration is virtually the Calvinistic theory, differing only as to the occasion, or conditions, on which the Holy Spirit effects the change.

12. McIntosh on Regeneration, p. 13.

13. Dwight, Theology, Vol. ii., p. 418.

14. Dwight, Theology, Vol. ii., p. 420.

15. Works, page 802.

16. Article on Regeneration, Princeton Review, 1830

17. New Catechism, Ques. 36.

18. Edwards' Works, Vol. ii., p. 382

19. Ibid., p. 381. This is true of subordinate but not of ultimate choices. The latter are per se holy or sinful, and not to the slightest extent modified by the motives or state of mind behind them.

20. Institutes, Vol. i., p. 381

21. Article on Regeneration, Princeton Review, 1830.

22. Edwards' Works, Vol. ii., p. 473.

23. Theology, Vol. ii., p. 689.

24. The writer distinctly remembers hearing, when a child, a clergyman say to his father: "It won't do to preach our doctrines in a revival of religion."

25. See "Virtue from a Scientific Standpoint."

## Chapter 5

26. Sermons, Vol. iv., pp. 281.
27. Theol., Vol. i., p. 385.
28. Institutes, Vol. ii., p. 174.
29. Institutes, Vol. ii., p. 171.
30. Works, Vol. ii., p. 512.
31. Sermons, Vol. iv., p. 287.
32. Works, Vol. ii., p. 538.
33. Lectures on Romans, p. 377.
34. Sermons, Vol. v., p. 271.
35. Eccl. History, McLane's ed. Vol. ii., p. 265.
36. Hist. Augustinianism, p. 368.
37. Eccl. Hist., Vol. iii., p. 301.
38. Works., Vol. ii., p. 843.
39. Theol., Vol. i., p. 244.
40. Theol., Vol. ii., p. 14.
41. Gen., 18, 25.
42. Theology, Vol. ii., p. 228.
43. Ibid., Vol. ii., p. 288.
44. Ibid., Vol. ii., p. 293.
45. Ibid., Vol. ii., p. 285.
46. Theology, Vol. ii., p. 285.
47. Works, Vol. ii., p. 33.
48. Theol., Vol. ii., p. 289.
49. Ibid., Vol. ii., p. 297.
50. Princeton Review, 1840.

51. Ibid.,

## Chapter 6

52. The Atonement, p. 314.

53. Chris. Theol., p. 401

54. Ibid., p. 400.

55. Atonement, pp. 40, 45.

56. Ibid., p. 48.

57. Ibid., p. 52.

58. Quoted by Professor Park, Atonement, p. 147.

59. Art, Beman on Atonement, Princeton Review, 1868.

60. Edward's Life and Sermons, p. 309.

61. Chap. III., Sec. 6.

62. Chap. VIII., Sec. 8.

63. From Doctor Hodge's Theology, Vol. ii., .517.

64. Wisconsin.

65. Essay, p. 24.

## Chapter 7

66. Outlines of Theology, p. 260.

67. Theol. Works, Vol. iii., p. 870.

## Chapter 8

68. Disciples.

69. Works, Vol. v., p. 394.

- 70. Christ and Humanity, p. 283.
- 71. Knapp Theol., p. 335.
- 72. Dorner.
- 73. Theol., Vol. ii., p. 389.
- 74. Christian Theol., p. 421.
- 74. Chap. viii., Sec. 2.
- 75. Christian Theology, p. 394.
- 76. Theol., Vol. ii., p. 391.
- 77. Theol., Vol. ii., p. 379.
- 78. Works, Vol. v., p. 397.
- 79. Com. on Isaiah, p. 52.
- 80. Chris. Theol., p. 427.
- 81. Humiliation of Christ, p. 155.
- 82. Ibid., p. 163.
- 83. Chris. Theol., p. 418.
- 84. Chris. Theol., p. 424.
- 85. Works, Vol. v., p. 395.